

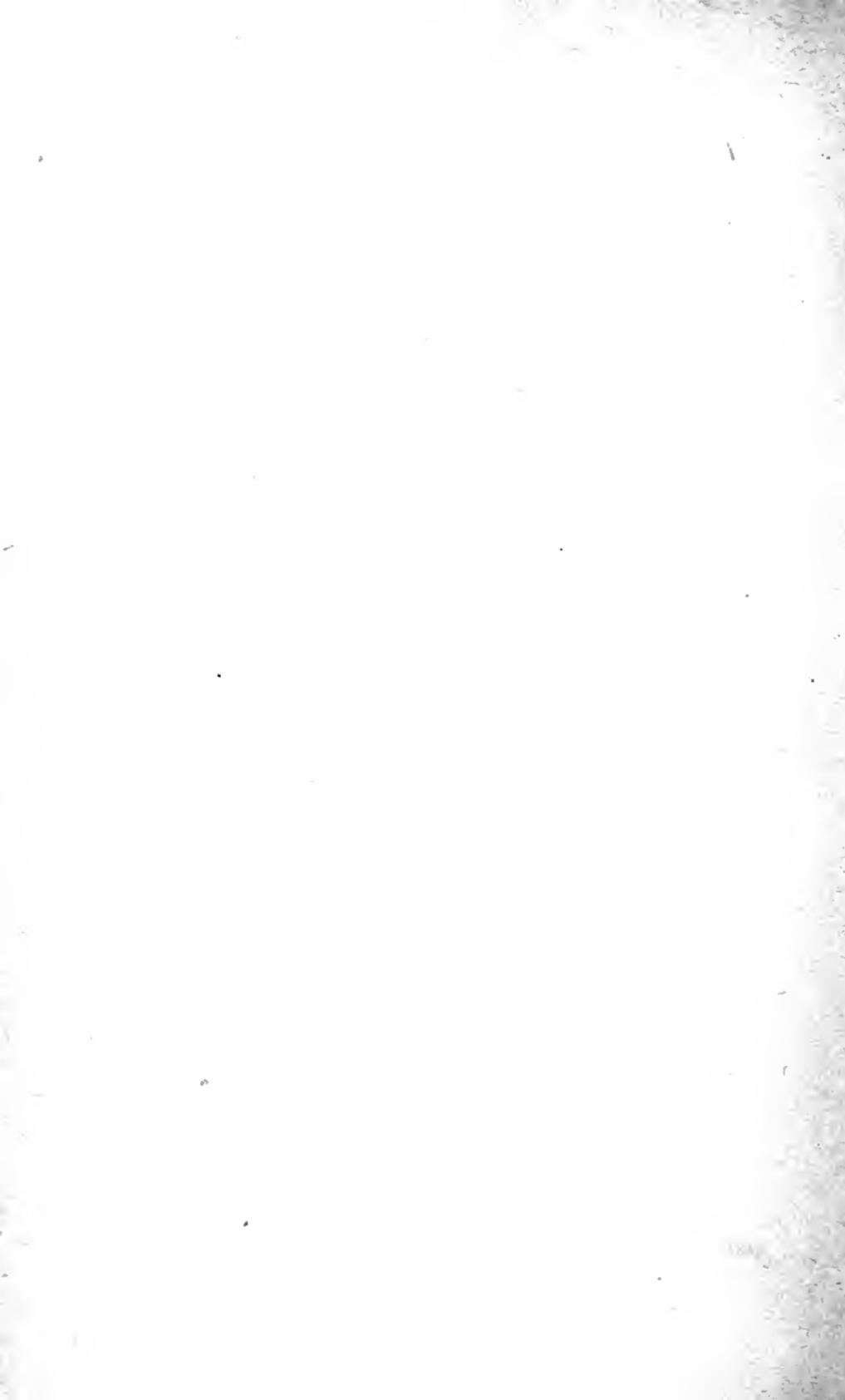
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# LEAVES

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# Annals of the Sisters of Mercy.

IN THREE VOLUMES:

I. IRELAND. II. ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND THE  
COLONIES. III. AMERICA.

## VOLUME I. IRELAND:

CONTAINING SKETCHES OF THE CONVENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE HOLY  
FOUNDRESS, AND THEIR EARLIER DEVELOPMENTS.

BY A MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF MERCY,

*Authoress of the "Life of Catherine McAuley," "Life of St. Alphonsus," "Life of Venerable Clement M. Hofbauer," "Glimpses of Pleasant Homes," "Happy Hours of Childhood," "Angel Dreams," "By the Seaside," etc., etc.*

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"We place Catherine McAuley in the first rank among Foundresses; unsurpassed by any of them in varied intelligence, in strong practical sense, in clear insight, and in what seems to us true heroic virtue."—BROWNSON.

"Established by God, the Gabriel of a new message, and the Raphael of new blessings to the world."—Right Rev. MONSIGNOR O'BRIEN.

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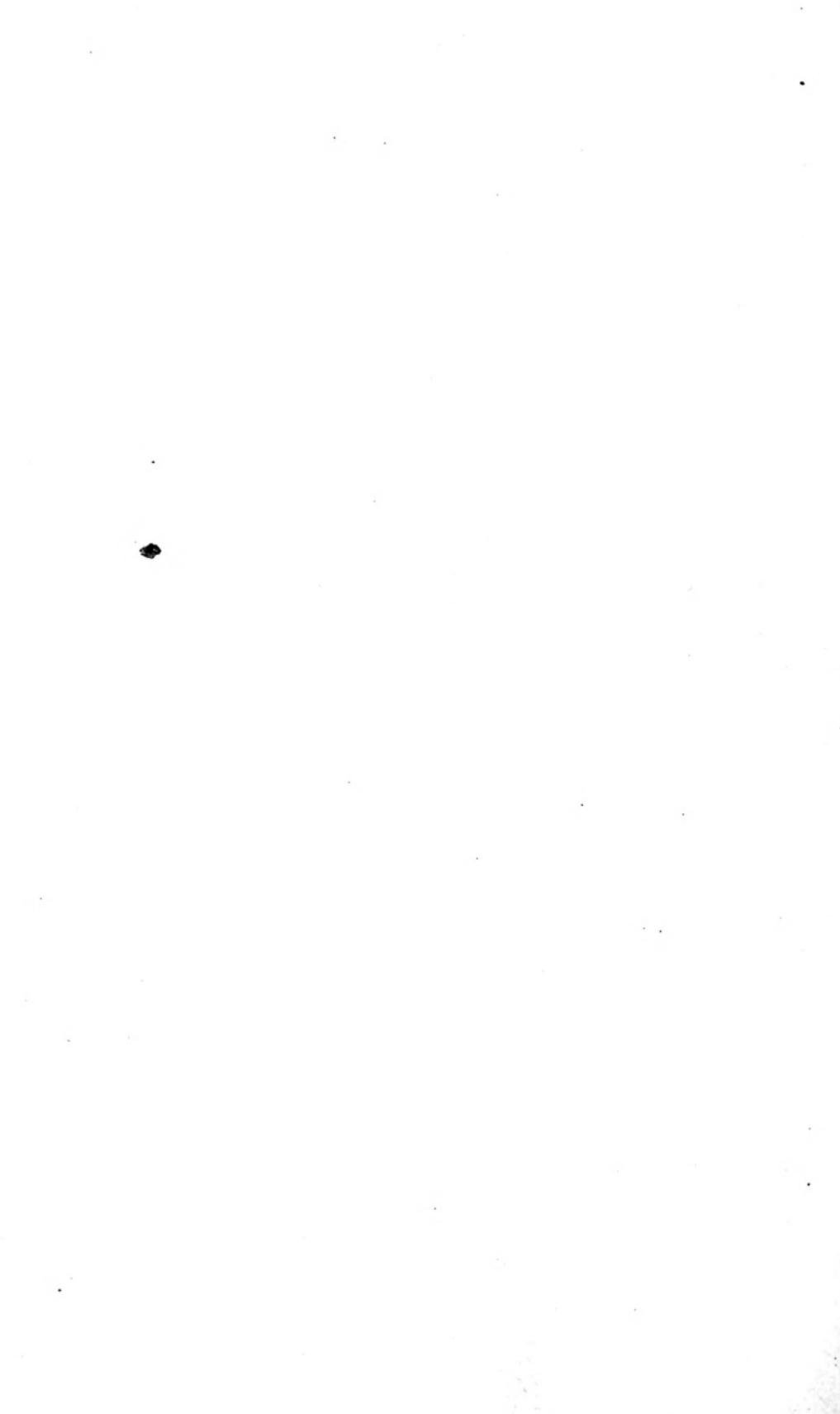
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TO THE  
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IN EVERY LAND,  
THESE SIMPLE RECORDS OF THEIR HOLY INSTITUTE  
ARE  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED  
BY THEIR HUMBLE SISTER AND SERVANT, WHO,  
AS THE BEST REWARD FOR HER LABORS,  
COVETS THEIR CONSTANT PRAYERS.

CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF MERCY,  
ST. ALPHONSUS',  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, December 12, 1881.



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# LEAVES FROM THE ANNALS OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CATHERINE'S EARLY DAYS.

Graphic Sketch of the Institute by the Foundress—A Jubilee Book—For general Circulation—Why?—Brownson's Estimate—Mr. and Mrs. McAuley—Catherine's earliest Reminiscences—Her Mother's Death—Orphans taken by Protestants—Confirmation—Old Churches—Life at Coolock House—Endeavors to draw Catherine from the Faith—Her Steadfastness—Early Directors—Foundation of the Order of Mercy—In less than twenty Years it has “sailed across the Summer of the World”—Father Nugent—Dr. Armstrong.

“The least shall become a thousand, and a little one a most strong nation: I the Lord will suddenly do this thing in its time.”—ISAIAS lx. 22.

IN November, 1839, several young ladies were preparing to be professed in the recently founded convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Limerick, and the reverend father who was invited to preach the sermon usual on such occasions, desirous of having an account of the Institute from the foundress which he could embody in his discourse, commissioned the mother-superior to apply for it. To this request we owe the following remarkable sketch of the Order from the graphic pen of its holy originator:

“I should find it very difficult to write what Rev. Mr. —— wishes; the circumstances which would make it interesting could never be introduced in a public discourse. It began with two, Sister Doyle and myself. The plan from the be-

ginning was such as is now in practice. In 1827 the house was opened. In a year and a half we were joined by such numbers that it became a matter of general wonder. Most Rev. Dr. Murray gave us his most cordial approbation and frequently visited us. All was done under his direction from the time we entered the house, which had been erected for the purpose of charity. Very Rev. Drs. Blake and Armstrong were the persons chiefly concerned. They received all the ideas I had formed, and consulted together for at least two years before the house was built. I am sure Dr. Blake had it constantly before him in all his communications with Heaven, for I can never forget his fervent prayers while it was in progress.

“Seeing our number increase so rapidly, and all going on in the greatest order, anxiety was expressed to try to give the house stability. We who began prepared to do whatever was recommended by authority, and in September, 1830, we went with dear Sister Harley to George’s Hill to serve a novitiate for the purpose of formally establishing it.

“In December, 1831, we returned, and the progress has continued, as you know. We are now (1839) above one hundred, and the desire to join us seems rather on the increase. Though it was thought foundations would retard it, the case appears to be quite otherwise. There has been a most marked providential guidance, which the want of prudence, vigilance, and judgment has not impeded; and it is here that we can clearly see the designs of God. I could mark circumstances calculated to defeat us at once, but nothing, however injurious in itself, has done us any damage. The loss of property has been supplied; the deaths of the most valuable Sisters have passed away as of no consequence; the alarm spread abroad by such frequent deaths did not prevent others crowding in; in short, it *was* to go on and surmount all obstacles, many of which were great indeed and proceeding from causes within as well as without. One

thing is remarkable: that no breach of charity ever occurred among us. The sun never, I believe, went down upon our anger. This is our only boast; otherwise we have been deficient enough, and far, very far, from co-operating generously with God. But we will try to do better, all of us: the *black-heads* [the professed] will strive to repair the past."

Such is the account which the holy foundress herself gave of the humble beginnings of her Institute. And all we propose to do here is to add some further record of her work and its later developments, as a fitting accompaniment to the commemoration made throughout the world of the JUBILEE YEAR OF THE ORDER OF MERCY, which dates its origin as a religious institution from the day of REVEREND MOTHER McAULEY'S PROFESSION, December 12, 1831.

As this work concerns religious chiefly, and among them a particular religious family, it was our original intention, fearing it might be destitute of *general* interest, to have it printed for the Institute of Mercy only. But in these days it is scarcely possible to confine any book to private circulation; and were it otherwise, it would not, perhaps, be charitable to limit to a comparative few the touching examples and beautiful illustrations of every virtue which it will be our privilege to record in these pages.

The great personages of Christianity remain for ever a power and an illustration in the Church of God. Their lives are among her choicest treasures, and the more they are known the more He is glorified. The rising generation of religious need to become better acquainted with the valiant women who bore the burden of the day and the heat, and who, to use the words of an eminent prelate, were a "bulwark and a blessing" to the Catholic Church; while, in their humility and obscurity, they, "by faith, conquered kingdoms and wrought signs." "None of the women," says Dr. Brownson,\* "who call for a wider sphere of activity can compare with Catherine McAuley in natural gifts, surpass

\* *Quarterly Review*, June, 1873.

her in all feminine qualities and accomplishments, or vie with her in her innate activity and energy of character, elevated, intensified, and sustained by supernatural grace ; yet she found, without ever going out of the field to which the Church and society restrict her, an ample field for her mind and heart, and full scope for her highest and holiest aspirations and her unwearied and ceaseless activity. Surpassing most men in the strength and energy of her intellect, in the elevation and breadth of her views, in the depth and solidity of her judgment, and her rare administrative ability, she is always the dignified, courteous, accomplished lady, as well as the meek, humble, and self-forgetting Christian. . . . She had a most loving heart, a most affectionate nature, and an exhaustless energy and activity, and no natural mother from nature alone could lavish so much love and tenderness on her children as she lavished on the poor."

Elsewhere we have given in detail the life of Mother McAuley.\* Here we will but touch on its more salient points. She was born on the feast of St. Michael, September 29, 1787, at Stormanstown House, County Dublin, of parents in easy circumstances and belonging to the class known in England and Ireland as gentry. Her father, James McAuley, was a man of sincere piety, who not only exemplified in his daily life the faith in which he gloried, but also busied himself about the works of mercy so frequently performed in our day by the St. Vincent de Paul Societies, especially the instruction of the ignorant. His great practical benevolence, genuine uprightness of character, and sterling worth won him the respect of many who despised his persecuted creed. Every one of these fine qualities descended in its full integrity to his illustrious daughter.

Her mother, Eleanor McAuley, was beautiful, amiable, and highly cultured, but wholly a woman of the world, and,

\* *Life of Catherine McAuley, 1866.*

as such, entirely out of sympathy with the apostolic labors of her husband. The only recollections Catherine retained of her early childhood were connected with her father instructing a motley crowd on Sundays and holidays in the hall or, if the weather permitted, on the lawn ; and her mother, always graceful and beautiful, delicate and morbidly refined, beseeching him, in accents of tender reproach, to desist from an occupation so “unbecoming to his character and position.” The zeal of the father, the grace and loveliness of the mother, and the powerful intellects of both were faithfully reproduced in their elder daughter.

Catherine distinctly remembered that her father always took sides with the lowly and the ignorant ; while her mother, though willing to be a sort of Lady Bountiful to the poor so far as relieving their corporal necessities, declared it preposterous for respectable people to sit down among them or strive to unravel the truths of faith to their dull intellects.

While Catherine was a mere child she lost her zealous father, and with him all prospect of being piously brought up. Her brother and sister, who were mere infants at their father's death, when grown up naturally went to church with their protectors. The foundation of their future Protestantism was laid by the Protestant friends of their mother through her criminal carelessness ; and though she was in the end truly contrite and torn with remorse, the poor woman was carried off before any arrangements could be effected to secure the faith of the orphans, who were soon taken by Protestant relatives.

Catherine, who, like St. Augustine, clung to the very name *Catholic*, through respect for her father's memory could never be induced to enter a Protestant church, but had had no instruction save what she gathered as an infant at his knee when she followed him about to listen to his burning words. While very young she received the Sacra-

ment of Confirmation in St. Paul's Chapel, Arran Quay ; Archbishop Troy, probably in view of the dangers to which she was exposed, overlooking her youth and dearth of knowledge, though, as she possessed a most retentive memory, she may have retained the essentials from her father's fervid instructions. To the graces received in that sacrament the foundress was accustomed to attribute the almost miraculous preservation of her faith amid the dangers and temptations of her early days.

To the end of her life Mother McAuley was most solicitous to have children well prepared and well instructed for Confirmation. For ten years after the opening of her Institute, 1827-1837, she herself prepared every class admitted to this great sacrament, and the first time she was obliged to delegate to another this precious duty we find her suspending all other business to write the minute instructions for Confirmation which we give further on. She even, no doubt in gratitude, inserted in the Rule a clause which imposes upon her daughters a special obligation to prepare children well for Confirmation. Her intense appreciation of the gift of faith naturally gave her a particular devotion to the great sacrament whose office it is to rouse and fortify *faith* in the Christian heart.

The state of things in Ireland, and especially in Dublin, during Catherine's childhood was very unfavorable to Catholic training. The seat of the viceroy and a brilliant viceregal court was also the place in which all schemes of proselytism centred. Poor Catholics passed by the stately edifices of the dominant persuasion to seek out the sacred barn behind the sign of "Adam and Eve," into which cowed\* and lowly groups wended their way stealthily, as the Christians of old to the catacombs ; or to dingy St. Michan's, in Mary's Lane, a secret stronghold of the Jesuits, where, after suppression, they awaited in peace

\* "A Catholic was known on the street by his timid gait," says the Catholic leader, John Keogh.

and resignation their certain resurrection ; or to St. James', when she first met her good friend, Dean Lubé ; or to SS. Michael and John's, in Rosemary Lane, where Catherine was instructed and consoled by the venerable Dr. Betagh ;\* or to St. Mary's, where she afterwards organized an industrial department in connection with the parochial school, to teach poor girls to make their own clothing. Some of these old places became very dear to her by association.

But as a child Catherine had no Catholic associates whatever. Her guardians she always described as most kind and amiable, but on one point inflexible : they would not permit her faith to be mentioned save in terms of withering scorn ; they allowed no books to come within her reach but Protestant, or even infidel, works ; and they wrought upon her mind and heart in season and out of season to induce her to go to their churches and to say : "I am not a Catholic." When, about 1804, she was adopted by a wealthy couple, owners of Coolock House, in a beautiful village near Dublin, they insisted that she should never profess the religion of her parents, though they allowed her to relieve and console the poor of the neighborhood. This she always did to the utmost of her power, and her poor friends, learning that their young benefactress was of the proscribed faith, sought to repay her by fervent prayers. And their petitions aided her ; for she "shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and it obtained help for her against all evil, better than the shield of the mighty and better than the spear."

It is greatly to be regretted that those to whom Mother McAuley related the incidents of her early life have been so inexact regarding the dates of its chief events. From collateral evidence, however, it may be gathered that as

\* Dr. Betagh was then doing among poor boys what his saintly penitent afterwards did for poor girls. His night-school in a wretched cellar, whither youths who toiled all day repaired for instruction in the evening, was a source of wonder and edification to her.

soon as she grew up she claimed liberty to practise her religion and sought to be thoroughly instructed in its principles. For she lived several years under the direction of Dr. Betagh,\* who died in 1811, and she was instructed and prepared for her First Communion by Dr. Murray at Liffey Street Chapel, long before his elevation to the episcopacy in 1809; from which facts it is clear that she resumed the open practice of her religion, interrupted by her father's death, as soon as it was possible for her to do so.

From childhood upwards Catherine was gifted with a seriousness beyond her years, though of a most bright and joyous disposition. She had no inclination for the follies and frivolities of youth, and labored to turn every hour of her life to useful occupation. She was very fond of reading, and often devoted a great part of the night to the improvement of her mind. Whatever good lay nearest at hand to be done she endeavored to do; nature had endowed her with a most affectionate, obliging disposition, and to do good to others was almost a necessity with her. She had a special talent, or rather a grace, for consoling the sorrow-laden and encouraging them to bear up cheerfully under the passing miseries of life, remembering that we have not here a lasting city. By her perfect fidelity to present duty she won grace to do perfectly the greater duties which were soon to devolve upon her.

While Catherine herself continued steadfast she had the anguish to know that her sister and brother were both living as strict Protestants. The former, while a mere girl, married Dr. William Macaulay, of the Royal Military Hos-

\* Said Mother M. Vincent Hartnett, who no doubt had it from herself: "When she [Catherine] was in darkness and perplexity of soul it pleased God to direct her to Very Rev. Dr. Betagh, whose learning and piety then reflected lustre on the struggling Church of Ireland. That great and holy man tenderly comforted and instructed the youthful confessor, . . . cleared away her doubts, and fortified her tottering resolutions. She read with earnest and profound attention the holy books he lent her." Dr. Betagh's favorite pupil and most ardent admirer, Bishop Blake, became Mother McAuley's spiritual director and best friend.

pital ; the latter became physician and staff-officer in the army, and was a good deal absent from his native country until after the battle of Waterloo, which closed his campaigns. Both these gentlemen were intensely prejudiced against everything Catholic.

It was the happy destiny of Catherine to become instrumental in bringing her sister, Mary Macaulay, her sister's husband, William Macaulay, and their five children to the true faith, as she had previously brought her adopted parents, Mr. and Mrs. Callahan. All this was done chiefly by her prayers and her example, though no means of winning these dear souls to the truth was left untried by this apostolic woman.

William Callahan died November 11, 1822, leaving his adopted daughter his sole heiress. She now felt that God required her to devote herself in some special manner to the lowly and the ignorant, since He had so unexpectedly given her the means of doing something lasting for their benefit. Now her early visions might be realized. Schools ; an institution for distressed women of good character, where they should be shielded from the dangers to which indigence exposes so many of their sex (she had seen melancholy examples of this) ; some plan of relieving and consoling the sick poor—all these benevolent projects entered her comprehensive plan. But, with characteristic prudence and docility, she confided all her ideas to Dr. Blake and Dr. Armstrong, two most holy priests, in whose wisdom and charity she placed unlimited confidence, and she took no step but in obedience. There was no unseemly haste in her actions ; prayer and counsel guided every movement. It would have been easy to rent a house, adapt it to her purpose, and begin at once. But no ; it was decided to build, that the edifice should be holy in its origin as well as in its use, and dedicated to God from the beginning.

A plot of ground on Baggot Street, corner of Herbert

Street, a fashionable locality, was purchased at an enormous price. This site was chosen, first, in order that the proposed institution should be among the first to emerge from the back alleys and byways to which centuries of persecution had consigned everything Catholic ; and, secondly, because it was the nearest vacant property that could be procured in the direction of the famous Kildare Street schools, which were supported by enormous government grants for the avowed purpose of proselytism. Early in July, 1824, Very Rev. Dr. Blake laid the first stone of the building, and on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1827, the new house, a mere shell, was solemnly blessed and opened for destitute women of good character, orphans, and scholars. Not one of those concerned ever thought of founding a convent. With all her piety Catherine never dreamt of becoming a nun ; she was, perhaps from early associations, rather prejudiced against nunneries, and rarely visited the few then in Dublin. Her plan, always subject to the approval of her spiritual superiors, was to gather together a few zealous ladies who, between the period of leaving school and settling in life, might, without inconvenience to their families, devote a few hours daily to the poor. Yet, unknown to herself, and almost in spite of herself, she on that day originated a religious congregation which, within less than twenty years from its foundation, "had sailed around the summer of the world."

It was Mother McAuley's experience that whenever she seemed to lean particularly on any individual death or removal came between her and her friend, as if God meant to show her that He Himself would work in and by her. Dr. Blake \* was summoned to Rome in 1824 to restore the Irish College, which had been suppressed during the French occupation of the Eternal City. Just as he left Ireland the will of Mr. Callahan was contested on plea of insanity

\* Michael Blake had been partially educated at Rome, whither he went for the first time in 1792, being then about seventeen years old.

in the testator ; and as this was before the Emancipation, it might have been contested on stronger grounds had it been publicly known that he died a Catholic. Now, as the cook and valet were in the secret as witnesses, the heiress naturally felt some apprehension. In this emergency she was singularly indebted to Father Joseph Nugent, of SS. Michael and John's, for whom she entertained a warm friendship. But it pleased God soon to deprive her of the counsel and efficient aid of this holy and gifted priest. He had no sooner assisted her through this difficulty than he caught typhus fever, and died, after fifteen days' illness, during which she scarcely ever left him, on the 30th of May, 1825, aged twenty-nine years. He was buried in the ancient cemetery of St. Columba, at Kells, and the horizontal tomb that covers all that was mortal of this zealous priest truly sets forth that "he crowded the labors and merits of many years into a short space of existence."

This loss was soon followed by a greater. Dr. Edward Armstrong departed to our Lord on Ascension Day, 1828. He had been her kind helper in many difficulties and contradictions, and, as the archbishop loved and esteemed him as a most holy and zealous priest, it was in his power to render her many services, and his time and influence were always at her command. Besides, her mind was often full of apprehension at the magnitude of the task in which she had almost insensibly engaged ; but this was trivial while her good friend was at hand to support and encourage her. It was he who had arranged with the architects, inspected the building during its progress, and, in short, relieved her of the most troublesome part of the business. It was he who contributed the first alms she received for the charities in contemplation, and furnished the first dormitory opened in the House of Mercy. A little before his death he handed her fifty pounds to be given to the poor for his soul's weal. And when, in agonies of grief at her approaching bereavement, she besought him to name some one to whom she

might recur when he should be no more, he said impressively : "Place no trust in any man ; let all your confidence be in God alone."

It was to Dr. Armstrong that Mother McAuley expressed her surprise, and even amusement, on finding that her architect, in making the building suit the ground, had given it a conventional character, and, when finishing the oratory, had placed a convent-grate between it and a small room adjoining, in the position of a choir! And she was struck with the gentle, impressive manner in which Dr. Armstrong said, in reply to her remarks : " *We* did not anticipate this, but God has His own designs in it."

When his life might be counted by moments Dr. Armstrong sent for the archbishop, whose confessor he had been for many years, and recommended to his grace, with peculiar earnestness, his holy penitent. "My lord," he said, "I have known this lady for many years ; I have seen noble instances of her charity and zeal, and I have long felt a conviction, which I have been unable to shake off, that Catherine McAuley is destined to accomplish some great work in the Church for the glory of God and the good of the poor."

## CHAPTER II.

### CATHERINE'S EARLY DAYS, CONTINUED.

Catherine continues to perform the Works of Mercy—Her ordinary Companions—Accessions—Miss Fanny Warde—Our Blessed Lady of Mercy—Baptism of Mary Teresa Macaulay—The Archbishop allows the Ladies of Mercy to visit the Sick as Sisters—Mother Catherine gains Admission to the Public Institutions—Christmas Dinner for poor Children—Accessions—Appointment of a Chaplain—Opposition to the new Institute—Embarrassment of the Archbishop—Dr. Blake aids the Foundress—A definite Arrangement.

AS Catherine's beloved sister, Mary, died while the Baggot Street house was building, duty and charity made it impossible for her to leave her brother-in-law's home for the present. But she spent her days at the "house," and varied the work of teaching by visiting the sick and poor in their own habitations, which she had for many years been accustomed to do, in the cabins around Coolock as well as in the lanes and alleys of Dublin. Except when obliged by her position to appear in society, she had always dressed with extreme plainness, and her one great means of relieving the poor before wealth had come to her in her own right was to economize as much as possible in her personal expenditure, and bestow on them the money which she might have devoted to the expenses of her toilet. Her plainness of dress and quietness of demeanor enabled her to glide about among her beloved poor without attracting observation. In these missions of mercy she was generally accompanied by one of her nieces, her godchild, Teresa Byrne, or her friend Miss Fanny Tighe. Her plans for Baggot Street house were proving a complete success; many of the first ladies assisted her in the schools, and some grew to love the occupation so much that they desired to live altogether at the new institution.

Until June, 1828, Miss Doyle and Miss Byrne were the

only ladies who resided at Baggot Street. In the previous year Miss Frances Teresa Warde, a young lady visiting her relatives in Dublin, was introduced to Mother Catherine by her niece, Mary Teresa Macaulay, who had met her in society ; for Miss Warde's time in the capital was spent in a round of visits and amusements. It was mutually a case of love at first sight. Mother McAuley, always kind and maternal with the young, took the orphan girl to her heart at once, and to Miss Warde her elderly friend became as the mother she had never known. Amid all her gayety and fashionable dissipation Miss Warde, having been piously brought up, had never given up the salutary habit of approaching the sacraments regularly. On one occasion her confessor, Rev. Father Lestrangle, a Carmelite friar, inquired how she spent her time, and, finding that she was quite her own mistress, told her she was responsible to God for every moment of her life, and that she ought to devote herself to some special good work, such as teaching a few hours daily at the school lately opened in Baggot Street. The young penitent at once acquiesced, and from that day was never missed from her class. Her great friend, Miss Elizabeth Harley, daughter of Captain Harley, soon followed her example. From June, 1828, Miss Warde began to reside at the house occasionally, and from October, 1828, she became a permanent resident.

On the first anniversary of its opening, Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 1828, Archbishop Murray, at the suggestion of the foundress, granted permission to have the new institution styled "Of Our Blessed Lady of Mercy," to the great joy of all the members, resident and non-resident. On the 22d of November Mother Catherine had the inexpressible happiness of seeing her beloved niece, Mary Teresa, received into the Catholic Church by the archbishop. The ceremony took place in the sacristy of the unfinished chapel of the parent house, and the beautiful young neophyte was the occasion of developing a newfea-

ture of the Institute ; for when Dr. Murray came to baptize her conditionally he gave the "Sisters," as they had begun playfully to call themselves, leave to visit the sick—a duty which they performed for the first time on the feast of St. Andrew, patron saint of the parish, November 30, 1828.

At this time no religious body in Dublin was allowed to visit the public hospitals, and Mother Catherine, knowing that the greater number of their inmates were Catholics, resolved to gain access to them for the purpose of communicating instruction and consolation. This she easily did through the influence of the head physicians of these institutions, who were her personal friends. And as she desired that her schools should be first-class institutions, she spent several hours a day for a long time in studying the system of education pursued in the Kildare Street schools with such lamentable success as had drawn hundreds of Catholics within their walls previous to the opening of the Mercy Institute.

On Christmas, 1827, Mother Catherine originated the Christmas dinner for poor children in honor of the Infant Jesus, and the equally charitable practice of sending supplies to poor families on that beautiful day when He who rules the world became poor and helpless for our sakes. The Christmas dinner, 1828, far surpassed its modest predecessor. Protestants of the highest rank waited on the poor little ones, and Daniel O'Connell, member of Parliament for Clare, did the honors of the table by carving. These practices are to a greater or less extent continued to this day in most houses of the Institute.

There were now thirty poor young women in the House of Mercy, who were trained to all manner of industries, and several hundred pupils in the schools. Early in January, 1829, Rev. Mr. McCormac, parish priest of Dundrum, brought his niece, Miss Anna O'Grady, a most zealous, pious young lady, to assist his friend Miss McAuley. He had never ceased to take a deep interest in the

foundress and her works since she had brought him to reconcile to the Church her only sister, Mary. In February, 1829, the husband of that beloved sister, who continued to bewail her death, was rather suddenly summoned to follow her. Attacked by a putrid sore throat, he desired his sister-in-law to bring him a priest, but died before his arrival, repeating the acts of faith, contrition, and charity which she whispered into his ear on that awful occasion. The foundress, her two nieces, and her godchild then permanently removed to Baggot Street ; her three nephews, James, Robert, and William Macaulay, she sent to Carlow College.

Before the close of 1829 Miss Marcella Flynn, Miss Margaret Dunne, Mary Teresa Macaulay, and Miss Elizabeth Harley had joined the rising Institute. The two former were presented by Dr. Blake. Miss Dunne, born in 1788, had outgrown what is conventionally known as the age of romance or enthusiasm, and, though she liked the Institute and the duties it embraced, she hesitated to join, fearing it would not be permanent ; but Dr. Blake and Father McCormac, whom she consulted, advised her to enter, as they felt convinced that the pious association would develop into a religious order, adding that meanwhile she could make no more holy or profitable use of her time and energies than in the performance of so many good works.

The residents and non-residents of the Mercy Institute naturally began to lay aside their silks and jewels and laces as out of keeping with their grave occupations, and a uniform of coarse black cashmere, with a plain net cap and veil, something like the costume now worn by postulants, was adopted. The archbishop having desired Mother Catherine to choose a name by which to designate her young disciples, she immediately selected a beautiful appellation in which a sweet womanly relation is blended with the divine attribute most dear to fallen nature : henceforth "the new nuns" were known as SISTERS OF MERCY.

The house was now so crowded that it became very inconvenient for its inmates to go out to Mass. They had been accustomed to hear Mass at St. Teresa's Church, in Clarendon Street, and always went to the same confessor, Very Rev. Father O'Hanlon, who kindly gave them every facility for fulfilling their spiritual duties and took care that they should not be delayed. The archbishop nominated Rev. Daniel Burke, O.S.F., chaplain, and on June 4, 1829, blessed the chapel and dedicated it to Our Lady of Mercy. At the same time Very Rev. Father O'Hanlon was appointed confessor.

"The new nuns" were under obligations of every kind to the Carmelite Fathers of Clarendon Street. As the chapel was unprovided even with necessaries, they kindly lent vestments and everything else required, until by degrees all were procured. And later, when death visited the young Institute, they, with extraordinary kindness, placed the vaults of St. Teresa's Church at Mother McAuley's disposal; and here her deceased children rested beneath the altar until her own bright spirit passed away and its earthly tenement needed a resting-place.

The archbishop recommended Mother McAuley to erect a gallery, as his grace wished that the public should be accommodated at the new Institute, there being then no church in that neighborhood. He said that the alms of the people would defray the expense of a chaplain, and if any remained over it could be appropriated to the House of Mercy. There were two Masses on Sundays and holidays, and one on week-days; and the people were so much pleased with the neatness and beauty of the little chapel, the regularity of the services, and the devout and touching sweetness of the music that they took pleasure in sharing the expenses, and when all were paid a good balance was generally found in favor of the House of Mercy.

Meanwhile all things in the new establishment were becoming too like monastic life to be permitted except

under monastic rule. "The new nuns" were not religious, and yet they did not live like seculars. Hard labor and severe mortification marked their days, and stated periods were allotted to prayer, examen, and spiritual reading. They referred to Miss McAuley for advice and direction as to a regularly appointed superior; they had daily Mass, weekly confession, and frequent Communion, and the privilege which religious value beyond all price—they resided under the same roof with the Blessed Sacrament. They never went abroad, except to perform some work of mercy. And yet they maintained that their Institute was not a convent, and that they themselves were styled nuns or Sisters only playfully or by courtesy! Towards the middle of July a storm of opposition burst forth, and the cautious archbishop was assailed on all sides for allowing such an anomaly as the new house presented. A priest of considerable influence pointed out that it was highly presumptuous of Miss McAuley to assemble ladies around her who addressed each other as *Sister* and wore a uniform which by its plainness and coarseness assumed the character of a religious habit. Besides, would not these unauthorized persons injure the good religious gathered about Mrs. Aikenhead in the northern part of the city—whose cause he hotly espoused—either by withdrawing ladies whose vocation attracted them to similar good works, or dividing the public charity which they administered? The zeal of this worthy man was scarcely according to knowledge, else he might have judged that there is, and always will be, in this poor world of ours more wretchedness than *Mercy* and *Charity*, in all their human embodiments, can relieve. The archbishop was embarrassed, and even annoyed, at the turn events had taken; it was suggested to him to hand the whole concern over to some regularly constituted Order, and when Catherine asked his grace if this were his design he said he did not mean to go so far, but added: "However, I did not think founding a new order was part of your

plan." After a pause he continued in freezing tones: "Really, Miss McAuley, I had no idea that a new Order would start up in this manner."

Two congregations had already been formed in Dr. Murray's diocese, for which his grace had legislated very carefully through his dear spiritual daughters, Mary Aikenhead and Fanny Ball; but the Institute of Mercy had arisen of itself, as it were, and yet no step had been taken but by his direction and with his express sanction. Its enemies, counting on the obedience of Mother Catherine—for her spirit of submission was known to be equal to her charity—sought to wring from the archbishop a decree of suppression, which she would have instantly obeyed; but no definite plan of action seemed to suggest itself to the anxious mind of the embarrassed prelate. Meanwhile Catherine became terribly agitated, fearful that her own will had been her guiding-star, and that what she had done could scarcely have been the will of God, since its results had not met with the approval of her archbishop. She wrote to Dr. Murray, begging him to do exactly as he pleased with her and the house; she was quite willing it should be transferred to any community he might select, and would deem it a favor to be allowed the meanest apartment in it and permission to labor in any capacity for the poor. Perhaps the archbishop would willingly have taken this road out of the dilemma, *but he could not do it*; something held him back.

It was in the midst of all this opposition that the whole economy of the divine will in her regard burst upon the mind of the foundress. Not only was she inspired to add a new gem to the brilliant diadem of the Church, but also to combine what had previously been regarded as incompatible, and to accomplish what had been unsuccessfully tried in Ireland and elsewhere: perpetual vows, a large amount of choir duty, and a strict observance of silence for many hours every day seeming all but impossible without the aid of cloister; while visitation of the sick, the neces-

sary intercourse with externs, and the works of mercy in operation within and without appeared out of keeping with so much choir duty. "Dr. Blake," she wrote, "received all the ideas which I had formed"; and she could not have submitted them to a more skilful director.

In 1830 the opposition became so violent that it seemed as if the Sisterhood must disband; and yet it continued to increase, and, of course, with the permission of the archbishop. And encouragement came from a still higher quarter. On the 23d of May, 1830, a Rescript of Indulgences from Pope Pius VIII. was granted to the Sisters of Mercy; the immediate instrument in procuring this ray of consolation for the little community being Dr. Whelan, a Carmelite friar. On the 10th of June Miss Georgina Moore, a pious and highly gifted lady, in her twentieth year, begged to be admitted; and on the 18th of the same month Miss Caroline Murphy, a mere girl, but of singular piety, who had made a vow of perpetual chastity at the age of twelve, came to devote many gifts, among them extraordinary personal beauty, to her Spouse and His dear poor. Miss Anna Carroll, of Dublin, followed, and the admissions for 1830 closed with Miss Mary Anne Delany, of Castle Durrow, a lady of extensive information and great piety. The community now numbered twelve, and, though assailed by opposition on all sides, its charitable labors increased with its growth, and the foundress felt that "it *was* to go on and surmount all obstacles, many of which were great indeed and proceeding from causes within as well as without."

Dr. Blake remarked to the foundress in July, 1830, that the Institute, like its divine Master, was now a sign to be contradicted; "but," added this real friend and true founder, "it is high time to rescue you and your associates from the anomaly of your present painful position." The result of a lengthened conference between the archbishop and himself was that the SISTERS OF MERCY should either be-

come real religious or live as世俗者； and as they unanimously selected the former alternative, it was decided that their Institute should be unconnected with any other, be governed by its own rules and constitutions, and that the practices of monastic life, as such, should as soon as possible be introduced among them.

To effect this his grace recommended Catherine to apply to the superiors of convents in and about Dublin for copies of their respective rules, and select from them that which seemed best adapted to her views. The Carmelites and Poor Clares were especially kind, not only complying with her request, but offering in the most affectionate terms to affiliate the house to their own. But the Presentation Rule, which is based upon the Rule of St. Augustine, seemed to coincide best with the life led at the new Institute, and Catherine informed the archbishop of her willingness to adopt it with the modifications and additions suited to the duties the Sisters of Mercy had undertaken.

The only matter for deliberation now was whether it would be better to invite professed members of the Presentation Order to train "the new nuns" to the practices of conventional life, or send some of the Baggot Street Sisters to serve their novitiate in a Presentation convent and return to train the others. After prayer and consultation the foundress, though in her forty-third year, decided on becoming a novice herself, and selected Sisters Anna Maria Doyle and Elizabeth Harley as her companions. On account of the inconvenience that might arise from a prolonged absence it was arranged that the novitiate should be shortened to the least time permitted by the Sacred Canons. The nine who were left at home thought it difficult to do without their saintly guide； but as it was the will of God they acquiesced as cheerfully as they could, and every arrangement was made necessary to secure the good order of the little community during her absence. The 8th of September, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin,

was selected for the departure of the three Sisters, Catherine wishing to honor her festival by the sacrifice and place her conventional life under Our Lady's special patronage. On that day, the morning devotions being over, Catherine took a fond leave of her beloved flock, and, with the two companions upon whom her choice had fallen, set out for George's Hill Presentation Convent, which was to be her *alma mater*.

## CHAPTER III.

### GEORGE'S HILL PRESENTATION CONVENT.

Origin of this Ancient Convent—Maria Teresa Mullaly—Letter of Nano Nagle—Fanny Doyle, of Dunshangly Castle—Official Return of the George's Hill Schools, 1824—Mother Clare Doyle receives Mother McAuley at the Gates of George's Hill—A severe Novice-Mistress—Recollections—Reception and Profession—Second and last Visit of the Foundress to George's Hill—THE TWELFTH OF DECEMBER, 1831—The Golden Jubilee—Catherine McAuley's very Name continues to inspire Piety and Benevolence—Pious and Charitable Deeds by which the Anniversary of her Profession is to be sanctified—Installation of the Sisters of Mercy at the South Union Workhouse.

GEORGE'S HILL Presentation Convent is a large, dreary-looking building, surrounded by lanes and markets crowded with the poorest classes, and in 1830 was still further adorned by the famous Newgate, which has recently been taken down and the space it occupied converted into a fruit and flower market—a great improvement to a wretched locality. Founded in 1794, its unattractive site was chosen to keep this oldest Catholic girls' school \* in Dublin as much out of view as possible ; for in penal times Catholic institutions, though always in disguise, did not presume to show themselves in stylish quarters.

As this venerable house will always have peculiar interest for the numerous children of Mother McAuley, a glance at its early history will not be out of place.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century a pious, hard-working woman, Teresa Maria Mullaly, who followed the trade of dressmaker, having, by industry and thrift, acquired a competence, rented a small house in Mary's

\* Dr. Betagh's evening school for poor boys, which still exists, is over a century old.

Lane, where she assembled poor children for instruction on Sundays and holidays, and her classes soon became so large that she resolved to establish a community of some kind to take charge of them, in which useful project she was encouraged by Father Mulcaile, S.J., and several other zealous clergymen. At this very time, 1777, Miss Nagle was endeavoring to establish a little society in Cork for a similar purpose, and Miss Mullaly, hearing this, proceeded at once to visit her. The two holy souls directly understood each other, and Miss Mullaly determined to wait for her community until her friend's new society would have developed into what it was destined to become. Several letters addressed to Miss Mullaly by Miss Nagle are preserved in the archives of George's Hill, and it is interesting to observe how holiness, which levels all distinctions, wrought a perfect equality between the aristocratic Nano Nagle and the humble dressmaker. The following curious specimens of the stately and cumbersome English of the foreign-educated ladies of the last century were religiously preserved by the lowly woman to whom they were addressed :

“CORKE, September 29, 1778.

“DEAR MADAME: This is a pleasure I have longed for this some time past, which was to acquaint you that, as Dr. Moylan mentioned to you about two years ago, I had a desire that some establishment should be made to keep up the schools for poor children. Not finding any person here inclined to undertake such an affair made me at last consent to the doctor's request, and last Christmas I took in three persons to join me in this good work. What made me defer it all this time was finding myself so improper a person to undertake it; but the Almighty makes use of the weakest means to bring about His works. . . . I send you the rule which they follow (it is called of 'The Sisters of the Charitable Instruction of the Sacred Heart of Jesus') by this most respectable clergyman, Mr. Shortal, who is most zealous for its success, and who will give you a particular account about it. I could wish that we may unite in this society, and am confident that the great God will direct

you to what is most to His glory, and beg you will believe me to be, with the greatest esteem, madame,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

“NANO NAGLE.

“To Miss MARIA TERESA MULLALY,  
St. Mary's Lane, Dublin.”

“CORKE, — 21, 1778.

“DEAR MADAME: I could not let slip this opportunity without assuring my dear Mis. Mullaly the pleasure it gave me to hear she arrived safe, and to assure her the trouble it gave me that I could not have more of her company whilst here, being every day more sensible of the advantage I should have reaped from it. The hurry I was in at that time made me neither think of many things which I should have been glad to have had your opinion on. . . . I have a gentlewoman that I really was resolved to take this some time past when fixed in the new house, but not till then—one is so much wanting at present, and the rule orders us to have them on trial for some months. She attends the schools, and I hope I shall have no reason to repent of the choice I have made, as my first motive was charity, hearing of the great distress she was in through a law-suit and an extravagant brother who spent part of her fortune. She has had the best education this kingdom could afford, and has many useful talents, with great patience and humility in all her misfortunes. She seems at present to rejoice in all she has suffered, as it has placed her in so happy a state. She takes much delight in teaching poor children. I hope that some part of what is due her will be recovered. All our Sisters assure you of their most affectionate respects. You cannot imagine how melancholy we were at night after you left us, as our recreation passed in speaking of you; and be assured you were not forgotten by us in our prayers. I hope you think of me in yours, as nobody wants it more than she who is, with the highest esteem, dear madame,

Your affectionate and humble servant,

“NANO NAGLE.

“P.S. It gave us all a vast deal of trouble to hear you were ill since you went to Dublin. I hope it was not owing to any cold you got on the road. . . .”

In October, 1788, the foundation-stone of the convent

was laid, and in August, 1789, Miss Mullaly and her zealous friends, Miss Anne Corballis and Miss Judith Clinch, took up their abode in the new house, where they employed their time teaching a number of poor children, whom they sent to Mass every morning to the little chapel in Mary's Lane.

Meanwhile Miss Mullaly induced several aspirants to the religious life to make their novitiate in Cork, whither she accompanied them. Among the party was Miss Fanny Doyle, of Dunshangly Castle, whose niece, Mother Clare Doyle, received Mother McAuley at the portals of George's Hill Convent in 1830. Two of these ladies returned and opened the new establishment on the feast of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady, 1794. In her abject humility Miss Mullaly, while continuing to manage the temporal affairs of the community, deemed herself utterly unworthy to assume the religious habit—then worn only on the greater feasts—or even to dwell beneath the roof that sheltered the spouses of Christ, and she withdrew to an orphanage which she had founded near the convent. A little before her death her health began to decline; but, regarding this as the result of her advanced age, she would not accept the attendance of a physician. On February 9, 1803, she received the Holy Viaticum, and at her request Sister Clare Doyle read aloud a fervent thanksgiving. In the evening she surrendered her pure soul to the God she had so faithfully served, her whole life having been a fulfilment of the maxim she constantly repeated: “Make your calling and election sure.”

From a condensation of the *Return of the Presentation Schools in answer to the Queries proposed by his Majesty's Commissioners of Enquiry into the state of Education in Ireland* (1824) we get a glimpse of George's Hill Convent in Mother McAuley's time:

1. These schools for the education of poor female children are situated on George's Hill, etc.

2. They are kept by ladies who form a branch of a religious order instituted in Ireland, about forty years back, for the gratuitous education of female children. . . . They are open from half-past nine till three o'clock each day—Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays excepted—and continue so the whole year round, with the exception of short vacations at Christmas and Easter and about three weeks in August. On Sundays the children assemble from one to two o'clock P.M. to receive moral instructions given by the Sisters.

3. The ladies of the convent, being the persons who instruct all, of course are Catholics, and they have been induced to devote themselves to the life they have embraced by merely following the bent of their own religious inclinations.

4. These ladies are individuals of independent rank, and were educated in various schools corresponding with the sphere in which they would have moved had they remained in the world.

5. The average number of pupils is two hundred and eighty; and though the school is open for children of every religious persuasion, yet none but Catholics frequent them.

6 and 7. The parents of the children evince the greatest possible desire of having them come to these schools, on account of the strict attention paid to their religious education.

8. Cannot ascertain the time in which a child can be taught to read. Depends on the capacity of the child and attention to school.

9. The religious are supported on their own properties.

10. There are three schools, each an oblong room. No. 1 is 33 feet by 18; No. 2, 28 by 16½; No. 3, 35 by 16½, all well lighted, aired, and furnished with desks, forms, labels, slates, books, tables, etc. The school-house is a large

brick building four stories high, the third and fourth floors being appropriated to orphans.

11. The rules of this Order were drawn up by Catholic divines eminent for their prudence, learning, and piety.

12. The only patrons are Most Rev Dr. Murray, the parish priest, Rev. Mr. Wall, and his coadjutors. The visiting clergyman is Rev. William Meagher, chaplain to the convent, who attends generally every day to hear the children's confessions, etc., and occasionally examines how the business of the school goes on.

13, 14, and 15. The text of the Sacred Scriptures is not read, but there are books used in which the leading facts recorded in the Old and New Testament are contained.

“Owing, in all probability, to the numerous Protestant schools in the city, instances in which any but Catholics have sought admission have been extremely rare—perhaps one in four or five years. But whenever it has happened no undue means have ever been used to induce them to become Catholics.

“But it is notorious that in many schools of the city vigorous efforts are made to weaken the religious principles of Catholics, and it often happens that the nuns are obliged to overlook breaches of school discipline through an apprehension that the children, if corrected, might be induced to quit the school and seek admission into schools where their faith might be endangered.”

The society which Miss Nagle founded in 1777, called “The Sisters of Charitable Instruction of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,”\* became the Presentation Order in the next cen-

\* Here is how Bishop Moylan mentions Miss Nagle and her projects in a letter to Pope Pius VI.: “Miss Honora Nagle, of respectable memory, had determined to employ the ample fortune she possessed in founding houses or communities for the admission of pious virgins, whose principal duty should be to instruct little girls in the rudiments and precepts of the Catholic faith, to teach them to work, to visit the sick women in the public infirmaries, and administer to them spiritual and temporal assistance,” etc.

tury, when the rules at present observed were confirmed by Pope Pius VII.

Sisters Catherine, Anna Maria, and Elizabeth were courteously met at the entrance of George's Hill Convent by the venerable superioress, who welcomed them affectionately and introduced them to her spiritual children. The annals of this ancient house have several passages relating to Miss McAuley :

"Miss Catherine McAuley, having erected a convent for a religious community under the title of SISTERS OF MERCY, . . . with the approbation of the archbishop, Most Rev. Dr. Murray, . . . was admitted, with Miss Anna Maria Doyle and Miss Elizabeth Harley,\* as postulants for three months, and one year's novitiate, on the 8th of September, 1830.

"MOTHER MARY CLARE DOYLE, *Superioress.*"

From this it will be seen that Baggot Street house was styled a *convent* long before it had any claim to the name.

The exact annalist notes that the usual novitiate pension, which in that house was thirty pounds a year each, was paid, and all other expenses defrayed. Two Sisters came every Saturday from Baggot Street to give Sister Catherine an account of how matters went on. The mistress of novices, Mother Teresa Higgins, was a convert of rigid views, highly accomplished, and well known in her day as a compiler and translator of several useful works. A venerable member of the George's Hill community mentions her as an excellent religious, and adds : "Feeling the re-

\* Sister M. Elizabeth Harley was the first professed member who died in the Institute, April, 1832.

Anna Maria Doyle, who had wished to be a Presentation nun before she met Mother McAuley, was delighted with everything at George's Hill; but Elizabeth Harley felt a great want in having only one charitable work—the instruction of poor girls—to devote herself to, and she ardently longed to get back to Baggot Street, where she could vary the labor of teaching by visiting the sick, etc. However, she dissembled her distaste, and devoted herself with her whole heart to acquire the virtues and practise the duties of conventional life.

sponsibility of training nuns to begin a new and different order may have made Mother Teresa appear too exacting; but she was not so in reality. She was most amiable in every way, and died the death of a saint." It is certain, nevertheless, that Mother Teresa was a most severe mistress, and, in Catherine's case, never allowed the most trifling inadvertence to go unpunished; continually treating her saintly novice as one called to high perfection and eager to attain it.

The Annals mention the chapter held for the reception of the postulants, November 8, 1830, after which came their distant retreat of three weeks and the immediate retreat of ten days. Though the house was thirty-six years established, there were but eleven vocals present at the chapter.

Only two at George's Hill to-day (1881) saw and lived with our dear novices. One, the present superioress, writes: "I, and all who knew Mother McAuley, revere her as most saintly, ever ready to do good and ever forgetful of self. We all loved her dearly. I remember the day she came here with Miss Agnew (1839), and how she kissed the chairs in the chapter-room and noviceship. The ancient nuns who were most saintly loved and revered her." Even the old cook, Susan, now blind and over ninety, still loves Mother Catherine.

The affection and esteem of these dear nuns Mother McAuley most cordially reciprocated. She was wont to call the days of her novitiate the happiest of her life, and to wish it were possible to be always a novice. The superior, Mother Clare Doyle, had been trained by Fanny Doyle, who had spent fourteen years in the Order before it was cloistered (1792-1806), and was therefore all the better able to understand the views of "the new nuns." She was charmed with the brightness and animation of Sister Catherine, who was regarded as the general prize of the recreation hour. And yet, as has been shown in her *Life*, Mother McAuley's novitiate

was a season of trials and difficulties in many ways ; but nothing seemed to disturb her serenity of mind or appearance.

Meanwhile postulants continued to seek admission into Baggot Street house. Miss Mary Jones, of England, a convert of a few months, entered in May, 1831, by the advice of her confessor, a priest on the London mission. Her family then lived at Bridgenorth, in Shropshire.

The preparation of Mother McAuley for profession was most fervent. She entered on her distant retreat October 9, and on her immediate retreat Friday, December 2. On the TWELFTH OF DECEMBER, 1831, she pronounced her vows for life, with the proviso that the vow of obedience should include whatever the Church might subsequently approve for the Sisters of Mercy. The archbishop presided, and Dr. Blake preached a solid and eloquent sermon.

Accompanied by Dr. Blake, the newly professed Sisters hastened to their home, where they were anxiously expected. Excessive labors and austerities which, in Mother McAuley's absence, there was no one to moderate had undermined the frail constitution of Caroline Murphy, who died a most saintly death June 28. Sisters Anna O'Grady and Mary Teresa Macaulay had also hopelessly injured their constitutions by immoderate labors and penitential exercises in the excess of their youthful fervor ; and though both brightened up at beholding once more their beloved spiritual mother, neither regained the strength that excessive labors and penances had robbed them of in her absence.

The first convent of Our Lady of Mercy was now formally opened and entered upon a career of prosperity, mingled, it is true, with many sorrows, almost unexampled in the history of religious orders. It is one of the marks of a divine mission that others readily receive its impulses. Many ladies of high social position and elegant education came from the north and the south, the east and the west, from England and Scotland and other countries, to offer themselves as disciples to the first Sister of Mercy. Bishops

from all parts of these countries, and even from America, besought her to give them colonies of her zealous children. Benefactors built convents and churches and placed them at her disposal, and the Holy See approved and blessed and confirmed the Rules she had arranged. As will appear throughout this work, the mercy and charity of her great heart became contagious, and people who had never before reflected on their obligation of helping, to the utmost of their power, their poorer brethren, now came forward and placed in her hands the means of carrying out all her benevolent projects. It is doubtful whether any other Order in the Church can show such a litany of benefactors for any fifty years of its existence. And as religious are bound to give spiritual goods in exchange for the temporal goods which aid them in carrying out their rules, the obligation on Sisters of Mercy of praying for benefactors is very grave indeed.\*

Only a short while ago the idea of becoming a nun was distasteful to Mother Catherine; now, animated with the fulness of the religious spirit, she loved her holy state with an enthusiasm that never lessened, and the happiness she felt in it was every day a new and joyous surprise to her. To find others seized with a similar attraction for the lowly and laborious life to which she had dedicated herself was a positive pleasure for which her soul went forth in gratitude to the good God. Reared among Protestants who spoke of her faith and its practices with withering contempt, she had, perhaps unconsciously, imbibed in this heretical atmosphere views and feelings which it was not easy to shake off; but now the finest Catholic instincts were developed in her, and her letters and *Sayings* prove her to have been practically versed in the highest walks of asceticism. People who enter convents nowadays have some little Catholic tradition

\* It is customary in many Convents of Mercy to have Mass offered every Monday for deceased benefactors and every Wednesday for living benefactors, besides many general communions, prayers, and other devotions.

or early association to aid them. They have seen nuns, or known them, or been educated by them ; they know what is becoming to such persons, what their spirit, their sentiments should be. But without any of these helps Mother McAuley became a typical religious, and trained hundreds of maidens, and not a few widows, to copy her own self-devotion and unwearied zeal. This was not, and could not be, the work of nature. No one can study the life of the great and holy mother without feeling that the finger of God is here ; for neither men nor women can do these things unless God be with them.

To-day still more than in her lifetime the very name of Mother McAuley is an incentive to acts of holiness and benevolence. And her children, now passing through the jubilee year of the foundation of their Institute, speak of celebrating the FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY of her profession by clothing fifty poor children, relieving fifty poor families, opening new houses as monuments to her zeal, receiving fifty poor orphans for her sake, establishing libraries for the poor and the prisoners, adding fifty good books each to the libraries already established, having Masses celebrated in thanksgiving for the graces bestowed on her and her children, and to beg that none of these latter may ever prove unworthy of the great Mother who begat them in Christ. At the old parent house, which now looks modest, and perhaps a little dingy, or rather venerable, beside so many elegant branches, it has been arranged that the room\* in which the great spirit of the holy foundress passed away be erected into an oratory, her grave magnificently decorated with lights and flowers, one hundred Masses of thanksgiving offered, a Pontifical High Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament till three, Grand Vespers, Benediction, and

\* The room in which Mother McAuley breathed her last has since been used as an infirmary, her children at St. Catherine's being naturally desirous that their souls should pass into the awful presence of the Judge of the living and the dead in a spot hallowed by her precious death.

*Te Deum*; the sermon of the day to be preached by the Dominican orator, Father Tom Burke. And it is hoped that the archbishop will, ere the TWELFTH OF DECEMBER, have received several new favors from the Holy See for the Institute founded in humility and obscurity fifty years ago. The parent house was originally styled St. Mary's, but on the decease of the holy foundress, November 11, 1841, the Sisters, to evince their affection for her beloved memory and to honor her patron saint, changed the title to St. Catherine's. Nor have they been without a confident hope that in God's good time their own St. Catherine will participate in the honors, as she so wonderfully did in the virtues, of the Seraph of Sienna.

It was the desire of the community of the parent house to consecrate the jubilee year by devoting themselves to neglected patients of the South Dublin Workhouse Hospital, and on the anniversary of the precious death of the holy foundress, November 11, 1880, the board decided to confide this duty to her children. The following is from the London *Tablet*, June 4, 1881:

"On Monday morning, at half-past eight, ten nuns of the Order of Mercy were installed as nurses in the South Union Workhouse by his grace the Archbishop of Dublin. The occasion was one of very great interest, inaugurating, as it did, a new era in the history of workhouse management, and commencing a system that has been found so universally productive of the happiest and most beneficial results. For many years past it has been the anxious desire of those who have at heart the spiritual and temporal interests of the sick and dying poor to introduce as nurses into the workhouse those whose mission is one of true charity, and whose practical goodness and unequalled and heroic self-sacrifice in the work they undertake have made their names one of the glories of our poor human nature. Nothing need be said in praise of those angelic ministers of mercy who, leaving everything that would seem to make

a worldly life most engaging, gifted with every grace and accomplishment, sacrifice every earthly pleasure and devote themselves to the service of God and the spiritual benefit of the poor and suffering. Their installation in the South Union Workhouse is, indeed, an event that must for ever be regarded as one of the most notable that have taken place in the life of that institution, and summer sun never shone on a more impressive spectacle than the function celebrated on Monday, by which those ladies were installed as nurses over some nine hundred of the poorest and most pitiable objects of human charity that one can look upon.

“The house provided for the reception of the nuns is a large, well-built stone dwelling detached from the main building and commanding a picturesque prospect. Everything that care and skill could devise to make it suited to its present purpose would appear to have been employed. The lighting and ventilation are quite perfect, the rooms are spacious and constructed, so far as internal fittings are concerned, with the utmost possible regard to comfort, convenience, and appropriateness. The refectory, the community-room, and the dormitory are in every sense suitable, and the chapel is also an extremely fine room. Already the nuns have decorated this chapel with great taste.

“His grace the Archbishop of Dublin arrived shortly after eight o'clock. He was accompanied by his chaplain, and was received at the workhouse by the master, the chaplain, etc. The mother-superior of Baggot Street met his grace at the Sisters' quarters and conducted him through the house. There were present also Very Rev. Canon Kennedy, Rev. F. Hall, O.C.C., etc. His grace celebrated Mass in the chapel, and after the Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament, and the *Te Deum* having been chanted, he briefly addressed the Sisters, and congratulated them upon having become installed in the scene of their new labors. He was quite sure their advent there would be the means of bringing enormous spiritual blessings to the poor

entrusted to their care. He could, through them, speak to those poor people, and he earnestly congratulated them on the good which had been achieved that day. The occasion was indeed deeply interesting. They felt heartily grateful to the guardians of the union for what they had done. Their own co-religionists, for their efforts and struggles all through in connection with this matter, were deserving of all praise and honor; to the Protestant guardians their thanks were also due. There was unanimity and cordial feeling expressed even by those who were most opposed to them in religion, and for this they were indeed grateful. He therefore begged to tender their thanks to the Protestant guardians, as to all others, and he hoped that, with God's blessing, their kindness to the poor entrusted to their care and their action in this special matter would bring to them blessings and happiness. In conclusion he would ask the gentlemen of the board who were present to convey to their fellow-guardians on the first opportunity—to the chairman, and each from the eldest to the youngest—his thanks for what they had done. He hoped that God Almighty would look on their act as one most pleasing to Him, and one that would bring upon them happiness, both here and hereafter.

“ His grace then made a circuit of the house, blessing it, and praying as he went, and, after some further devotional exercises, the ceremony terminated.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### DEATH OF THE FOUNDRESS.

Comparatively early Death of the Foundress—Letter of Mother M. Teresa White—Mother Elizabeth Moore—Letter from Dr. Blake—Cemetery in which the sacred Remains of the Foundress repose—“Laid in the Earth like the Poor”—Inscription on her Tomb—The Remains of her early Companions “brought Home” and deposited around her.

THE holy foundress of the Order of Mercy did not live to celebrate her tenth anniversary. She passed to our Lord November 11, 1841, the anniversary of the deaths of her adopted father, William Callahan, and of her beloved niece, Mary Teresa Macaulay. During her life “the tomb had never been closed in her regard,” and scarcely one of her old children would have been near her in death had not Mother Elizabeth come from Limerick in time to watch over her last moments. Mother M. Teresa White arrived from Galway only when her beloved mother had departed. After forty years this venerable mother writes: “I entered the convent May 2, 1833. Our beloved mother-foundress was my mistress of novices until near my profession, December 9, 1835. I was seven months a postulant in consequence of the illness and death of dear Sister Mary Teresa Macaulay. I was deeply attached to our cherished mother. She was a perfect nun and a perfect lady—one to whom you could open your whole heart. She was so sweet, so kind, so spiritual; I never met any one like her. She made the interests of every convent her own, and gave each Sister a place in her heart, so generous, so full of humility, so disengaged from earth. I saw her in death, and was one of those who placed her in her coffin. I was mother-superior in Galway at the time, and came to Dublin hoping to see and speak to her for the last time; but she had departed four hours before I arrived, and I

never felt such grief before or since. I cried for many hours without ceasing.

"Her appearance was very remarkable. There was something about her so kind yet so discerning that you would fancy she read your heart. If you came to speak to her on the most trifling matter, although occupied with the most important affairs, she would instantly lay all aside and give you any satisfaction in her power. She was rather tall, about five feet five inches, and had a queenly air. I feel very sad to have outlived her and all my early friends, but God's holy will be done. Pray that He may crown all His favors to me by the precious grace of a happy death."

When Mother Elizabeth Moore informed Dr. Blake that his cherished spiritual daughter was at rest from her labors, the saintly bishop sent to the bereaved community the following beautiful letter :

"We have all reason to weep at the loss which Ireland and England have sustained in the death of the ever-memorable FOUNDRESS OF THE ORDER OF MERCY. A more zealous, prudent, disinterested, and successful benefactress of the human race has not existed since the days of St. Brigid. She has been taken from us after bestowing incalculable services and benefits on her fellow-creatures. What she accomplished would suffice to attach celebrity to many individuals. Her course was long enough to render her immortal among the virtuous. But judging what she would do had she been left longer among us from what she executed amidst difficulties and trials of no ordinary magnitude, we cannot but lament her departure, and we are tempted to exclaim : 'Oh ! it was too soon.' But God's holy will be adored at all times; to Him we are indebted for all that she did ; from Him she received the spirit that animated her pure soul. His providence guided her steps, removed her difficulties, strengthened her heart, and ensured her success. By His ever-watchful care and ever-assisting grace every opportunity of doing good was turned to ad-

vantage, every undertaking well preconsidered, every work made solid and permanent; and though her sojourn here was, alas! too short for our wishes, it was, nevertheless, so far prolonged as to have enabled her to finish the great machine she planned and constructed for the glory of God, the salvation of souls, and the corporal relief of the destitute. Let the holy will of God be ever adored; let us bless His name at all times; and in this moment of bereavement, while we lament the loss such a removal has occasioned, let us be grateful for the benefits conferred, and profit by the good example still fresh before our minds.

“Most earnestly and sincerely do I sympathize with all the members of the holy Order of Mercy. Most ardently do I beseech the God of all consolation to pour His healing balm into their wounded feelings, and in this trying conjuncture, while their hearts are mellowed with love, grief, and gratitude, to fill them all with the spirit of prayer. Although the foundress was holy, and eminently holy, still she was a human being, liable to human temptations and infirmities, and obliged daily to repeat that hallowed petition, ‘Forgive us our trespasses.’ Let us now be mindful of her, and by our fervent supplications obtain for her, if indeed she need it, the entire remission of the smallest debt which could retard her admission into the realms of bliss.

“Your letter reached me just as I was going to the altar this morning. On seeing the black seal I hastily opened it, and my heart was intensely filled with grief; but this was useful, I hope, in making me offer the divine Sacrifice of propitiation for the happy repose of that dear departed friend, whom I ever esteemed and reverenced, and whose memory I shall ever value and revere.”

One of the last acts of the holy foundress was to have the cemetery prepared in which she now reposes. It is about forty-three feet long by thirty-eight feet wide. Over her last resting-place is a slab six and a half feet long and

two feet wide, at the head of which is a life-size statue of Our Lady of Mercy. The slab is inscribed :

TO THE REVERED MEMORY OF MOTHER  
MARY CATHERINE McAULEY,

FOUNDRESS OF THE RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION OF  
SISTERS OF MERCY.

BORN SEPTEMBER 29, 1787. PROFESSED DECEMBER 12, 1831.

APPOINTED MOTHER-SUPERIOR DECEMBER 15, 1831.

DIED NOVEMBER 11, 1841, AGED 54 YEARS, 1 MONTH, 13 DAYS.

The holy foundress closed her eyes on earth about ten minutes before eight o'clock P.M. on Thursday, and was, according to her oft-expressed wish, "laid in the earth like the poor" about 4 P.M. the following Saturday, five bishops and sixty priests assisting at her obsequies. The little cemetery was consecrated specially for her by her faithful friend, Most Rev. William Kinsella, Bishop of Ossory, her children being unwilling to be deprived for ever so short a time of her blessed remains. The thirteen dear Sisters who had preceded her, and whose remains lay in the vaults of the Carmelite church, were brought home and deposited near her. Their toil is done, their souls are with God, and they rest well ; for *blessed are the dead who die in the Lord!* *They rest from their labors, and their works follow them.*

## CHAPTER V.

### DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PARENT HOUSE.

Charitable Infirmary—St. Brigid's Schools, Rathdrum—Athy—St. Mary's Retreat—St. Joseph's Night Refuge—The South Dublin Union—The Prison at Golden Bridge—How to reform Female Prisoners—Remarks—Mountjoy Prison—The Chaplain's Testimony—The Monster Hospital, Mater Misericordiæ—Mother M. Xavier Maguire—Solemn Opening of the Mater Misericordiæ—Description—Utility in Times of Epidemics—Spiritual Good effected—The Mater Misericordiæ a great School of Medicine and Surgery—Sir William Wilde—Cardinal Cullen—Lord O'Hagan—Respect shown to the Rights of Conscience—The Training College for Teachers.

**S**INCE the happy departure of the holy foundress several new institutions have been added to the parent house :

The Charitable Infirmary, Jervis Street, the oldest hospital in Dublin, founded in 1721 by a band of medical men, was placed under the care of the Sisters of Mercy in 1854. It is a plain brick building, containing reception-rooms, board-room, lecture-room, and six spacious wards capable of accommodating seventy patients.

St. Brigid's, Rathdrum, near Dublin. To this convent are attached schools for the higher classes, and a large school for the poor containing several hundred children.

St. Michael's, Athy. Superior schools for the middle and upper classes. The poor-schools are attended by six hundred children.

St. Mary's Retreat, 104 Lower Gloucester Street, is a Magdalén asylum for forty-five penitents.

St. Joseph's Night-Refuge for Homeless Women and Children, Brickfield Lane. Eight hundred children are educated in the poor-schools attached to this institution.

This JUBILEE YEAR, 1881, as we have stated, has been

signalized by an event of great import to the Dublin poor. The hospital of the South Dublin Union, containing nine hundred patients, has been placed under the charge of the Sisters of Mercy, making their twelfth establishment in the diocese of Dublin.

Of the institutions added to the parent house since 1841 three deserve special notice: the Prison, the Mater Misericordiæ, and the Training College.

The Prison Refuge at Golden Bridge: "It was in Ireland that the problem how to reform our female criminals was first solved, and it is mainly owing to the Sisters of Mercy that the solution was accomplished. The reformation of a female prisoner has long been acknowledged to be a harder task than that of a male. She has sinned more against the instincts of her better nature; the consequences of her crime have had a more hardening effect upon her; but, above all, the absence of *hope* has a fatal effect on her character. If a poor woman endure her sentence patiently and keep the prison rules she goes out with very little prospect for the future, save that of fresh dishonesty."

"For many years the Sisters of Mercy have been accustomed to visit the inmates of Mountjoy Prison, the principal and strongest jail in Ireland.

"Here they exercise a most beneficial influence over the miserable inmates. They instruct them in classes, and it is a rule that no prison official shall be present. Yet the classes often consist of wild, desperate women with great physical strength and easily-roused passions. . . . Among these the Sisters move fearlessly, and never have had to suffer. Even the wild din of tongues issuing from those kept all day and many a day in enforced silence is hushed by the uplifted finger or the gentle tones of a Sister of Mercy. Great good was, therefore, to be expected from placing these women for the concluding part of their sentence in a refuge under the sole care of these Sisters."

This was done in the *Silver Jubilee* year of the Institute,

1856. The Refuge, being strictly intended as a reward for good conduct, is regularly graded, and the hope of being promoted to a grade which allows more freedom, and the fear of being sent back to an inferior grade which has already been honorably passed, have such influence on the prisoners that order is easily maintained. It is very rarely that a prisoner fails of being thoroughly reformed in this most beneficent institution. And the *hope* of getting to the Refuge to finish their sentence gives rise to an amount of exertion to do better, on part of the women prisoners of Mountjoy, which makes the duty of the officials of that dreary establishment comparatively light.

The Golden Bridge Refuge is very favorably mentioned in the reports of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland as "a most valuable adjunct to the convict system, and of great utility to the women in providing them with suitable means of employment and keeping them from falling back into a course of crime. The management of this valuable institution deserves to be mentioned with commendation, and with thankfulness to the managers whose able and devoted attention produces such excellent results."

The chaplain of Mountjoy Prison adds his testimony: "It was my privilege a few days ago to visit the Refuge at Golden Bridge, under the care of the Sisters of Mercy, and I was happy to observe that they had gained such an influence over the prisoners that they obeyed willingly, and order and discipline are maintained without trouble. Indeed, the services rendered by the Sisters of Mercy in promoting prison discipline cannot be fully appreciated, except by those who are intimately acquainted with the working of our prisons, and have an opportunity of knowing what efforts are made by the prisoners to gain admission to the Refuge. The Sisters instruct and console them while under their charge; and on being discharged they use their influence to provide them with situations or restore them to their families."

The Mater Misericordiæ is the chief hospital in Ireland, and is not inferior to any institution of its kind in the world. The idea of this superb establishment originated with Mother McAuley, who was anxious that the Sisters should have a hospital of their own, in which the spiritual and temporal wants of the poor could be perfectly ministered to, and from which patients should not be compelled to go until their health was completely re-established. For she saw with grief that many poor convalescents were obliged to leave the public hospitals and resume work before their health was sufficiently restored. "Besides," said she, "though some hospitals have comfortable arrangements and a sufficient staff of nurses, there is a great difference between the attendance of hired persons and the services of those who devote themselves to the sick for the love of God." It pleased God to reserve the carrying out of this noble idea to her successor and dearly loved spiritual daughter, Mother Xavier Maguire, who died recently on the Australian mission, R.I.P.

"In the conception and progress of this great work," says a friend of this zealous and holy religious, "there presided a guiding spirit—one of those rare characters from whom *great* actions may be expected—and it was her principle, which was here strenuously carried out, that those who labor for God's glory should strain every nerve to make their work equal, if it cannot excel, the deeds of those who toil for an earthly reward."

The following description of the opening of this monster hospital is condensed from the *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin):

This great institution was solemnly opened and dedicated to its high and holy purposes by his grace the Archbishop of Dublin in presence of a large assemblage of the clergy, the Sisterhood of the Order of Mercy, and a great number of ladies and gentlemen. The splendid apartment facing the principal entrance was fitted up as a temporary chapel and was most beautifully decorated. The altar bore on its

front a figure of the Saviour after crucifixion, with figures of the Blessed Virgin and Mary Magdalen, admirably carved. Crimson draperies were judiciously introduced behind the tabernacle, which was surmounted by a throne for the Blessed Sacrament, around which were placed hundreds of wax-lights, interspersed with rare flowers and exotics. The ceremonies commenced at eleven with Pontifical High Mass. The sacred music was sung in admirable style by a number of ladies of the community. At the conclusion of the High Mass the archbishop pronounced the episcopal blessing. The Forty Hours' Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament ensued. A long procession was formed and proceeded through the splendid corridors of the hospital as the choir of priests and Sisters chanted the *Pange Lingua*. It was headed by numbers of little girls elegantly dressed, bearing banners and wearing wreaths of flowers and veils on their heads. Six tiny creatures bore baskets containing flowers, which they strewed on the course the procession was to take. The Sisters of the community followed bearing lighted tapers. Then came the dignitaries and clergy. The procession was closed by the archbishop, who bore a gold remonstrance under a splendid canopy of white satin richly decorated with bullion lace. Along the walls of the corridors banners with religious mottoes and devices were suspended, and in the spaces of the windows flowering plants and exotics were tastefully arranged. Nothing could be more solemnly effective than the appearance of the procession as it moved slowly through the magnificent hospital that was now being blessed by the officiating prelate prior to its doors being thrown open to the sick and dying. On the procession returning to the chapel the Litany of the Saints was intoned and the Forty Hours' Adoration commenced. It will terminate to-morrow, when the archbishop will preside, and at the conclusion of the ceremonies the Mater Misericordiæ Hospital will be formally thrown open to the sick poor.

The northwest façade is three hundred feet in length, and is divided into five compartments by slightly projecting pavilions at the ends and a great central projection, over seventy feet long, having in the middle a recessed portico with massive Ionic columns, and forming, with four adjoining pilasters, a frontispiece crowned by a great pediment, which overtops the rest of the building. Behind this is the cupola, rising one hundred and twenty feet. Two approaches to the ground floor lead into spacious waiting-halls for outdoor patients of both sexes; and on either side are doctors' rooms, private consulting-rooms, ward dispensaries, etc., and in the rear a spacious laboratory with all necessary accessories. Passing through the corridor, right and left are temporary reception-wards, with bath-rooms for patients on entering. Spacious wardrobes, fumigating-rooms, hospital-stores, heating apparatus, entrance-halls and staircases from recreation-grounds, servants' rooms and refectories, lifts for beds and for the food of the patients; the great kitchen seventy feet in length, the larder, stores, oven, bakehouse, laundry, drying-room, vapor-baths—all on ground floor. The second floor is approached by two circular staircases of moulded granite. Passing through the portico to the entrance-hall, which is richly furnished with mosaic pavements, niches, pilasters, and lofty domed ceiling, on either side are the public reception-rooms, great linen dispensary, accident-wards, convalescent-rooms, etc. A corridor, twelve feet in width, with lofty groined ceilings, branches round the entire building and terminates in the chapel. Opposite the entrance-hall is the grand staircase, which requires to be seen to be fully appreciated; behind it is a beautiful apartment, fifty feet by thirty-four, adorned with Corinthian columns. On either side are cross-corridors leading to operation-wards, baths, etc., on both stories, and over it are the pathological museum and an operation-theatre altogether unequalled in the country. The chapel occupies the central portion of

the rear and communicates with the convent by a corridor entered by a campanile rising ninety feet above the surface, and which forms the vestibule of approach from the convent to the wards.

The Mater Misericordiæ accommodates five hundred patients, and at a period of calamity could easily be made to accommodate seven hundred. As it has been erected for the poor, chiefly if not solely, there are only twenty-eight private rooms for as many pension patients.

Patients are admitted without any recommendation other than the fitness of the case for admission.

During the year 1866 eleven hundred patients passed through the wards of this hospital, and three thousand four hundred and ninety-one were treated as out-patients. When Dublin was visited by cholera it instantly threw open its doors to the victims, and at all hours of the day and night the Sisters and the medical men were ready to take them in, and the tenderest and most vigilant care was bestowed on them. It fell to the task of one Sister to compose the limbs and shroud the bodies of more than one hundred victims of this terrible disease.

“Immense spiritual good is wrought within these walls. Kind and gentle words make a great impression on the careless ; the example of self-devotion they see before their eyes tends to strengthen it. If they murmur under their poverty and sickness, they see those born to comfort and luxury giving up all—imprisoning themselves within hospital walls—to wait on them ; and advice from such a quarter is more appreciated.”

The Mater Misericordiæ has now become not only a first-class hospital, but also a great school of medicine and surgery. It numbers among its enthusiastic supporters men of all shades of religious opinion. The solicitor-general, Mr. Dowse, M.P., since a baron of the Exchequer, says : “As a Protestant I feel a pride and pleasure in taking part in this work, for in this place relief is administered to all, with-

out consideration of sect or party. The only passport required in this hospital is that the person applying should need its shelter and assistance"; and Sir William Wilde, M.D., so highly distinguished in his profession: "I have the honor of bearing my meed of testimony to those noble ladies, of whose bounty and charity and willingness to minister, in all respects, to the spiritual and temporal welfare of this institution I have had long experience."

At a meeting held in the board-room of the hospital, November 1, 1869, under the presidency of the cardinal archbishop, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the Earl of Granard, and others spoke to the same effect. The former, Lord O'Hagan, said: "Whether the postulant be Catholic, Protestant, Mohammedan, or Jew, he is God's work, made in His image; and the gate opens freely to him without a question as to his religious faith. He is not asked to violate his conscience that he may receive relief. . . . The name of charity is not desecrated by intolerance. It is not made a bait to corrupt, or a sword to persecute, wretches broken down by disease to incapacity of resistance and powerless to help themselves."

The above quotation is taken from the first annual report, which has also the following:

"Annexed to this report is a statement of the receipts and expenditures for the past twelve months. We cannot conclude without expressing our admiration of the good order and cleanliness of the hospital. The admirable manner in which it is kept, and the clear and accurate system of accounts, have given us the greatest satisfaction and reflect the greatest credit on the Sisters of Mercy."

Although the *Mater Misericordiae* is the property of the Sisters of Mercy, who alone are responsible for its management, they have called to their aid a "council" of the leading gentlemen of Dublin, to whom the accounts are exhibited, and whose advice and co-operation are gratefully received. Lord O'Hagan, one of this council, says:

"The contribution of the Sisters of Mercy (L10,000) was very great indeed. And this they offered that they might open for themselves a new field of labor, made terrible by mephitic vapors and the groans of tortured men, and bringing them into fearful contact with pestilence and death. And since the hospital has been established they have been its only nurses. They have ministered *with their own hands* to its suffering inmates, repelled by no form of disease, however loathsome, and declining no office, however mean, so that they mitigate a pang or speed a soul more peacefully to heaven. And all this they have done gratuitously, not merely receiving no stipend for their services, but maintaining themselves from their own resources and not taxing even for their food the funds of the hospital, in which they toil unceasingly, to the extent of a single farthing. Surely this is admirable, and not less admirable, too, is the rule by which they open their doors, at all times and under all circumstances, to every human being who needs their help, without let or hindrance. Suffering is the sole condition of its own relief. It requires no passport from wealth or rank. It is subjected to no cold or jealous scrutiny. There is no fear that a human being will perish at the door while those within deliberate on the propriety of his admission."

And Cardinal Cullen, who well remembered the foundress, with whom the idea of this grand institution originated, said :

"I recollect, when it was proposed to commence this hospital, there was a difference of opinion about the merits of the plan according to which it is now erected. Some said that the proposed building would be too expensive, and that it would be better to erect an humble and less ornamental structure which would be more in harmony with the miserable normal condition of our poor. Having been consulted on the question, I declared in favor of the present plan. We have palaces for guilt, we have palaces

for force, we have palaces for legalized want in which what is called *pauperism* is dealt with according to the principles of an unfeeling political economy. Why, then, should we not have at least one palace for the poor, in which poverty would be relieved in a true spirit of charity and according to the dictates of the Gospel? . . . The Sisters of Mercy, acting according to the spirit of their Institute, determined to adopt the plan best calculated to elevate and enoble poverty, and they have been most successful in erecting an hospital which does credit to their good taste and is a great ornament to the city."

Speaking of the respect shown to the rights of conscience in this thoroughly Catholic institution, the cardinal says: "Whilst taking care in an especial manner of those belonging to the Catholic body, the nuns at the same time take the greatest precaution lest there should be any interference with the patients who belong to other churches. They are allowed the fullest liberty to practise their religion; they are allowed to call in the ministers of their own church, and prepare themselves in any way they think fit to meet their eternal God." And here his eminence, having mentioned an hospital which has a rule that no Catholic priest shall be admitted within its walls to assist the dying of his own communion, adds: "I hope no Catholic hospital will ever give such an example of bigotry and intolerance."

The number admitted yearly to the Mater Misericordiæ now amounts to thousands; and the extern patients prescribed for and supplied with medicines in the dispensary are counted by tens of thousands.

Another development of the Institute is a Training School for teachers. The parent house has always at least seventy young girls in training for national school-teachers and governesses. The applications for admission are so numerous that the Sisters are building a larger house, at a cost of £6,000, to accommodate a greater number. In

view of the struggle going on at present for Catholic education this Training College has become peculiarly important. Archbishop McCabe remarked in his address to his first synod, December 17, 1879 : "As you know, our Sisters of Mercy . . . are doing great good in rearing up promising young women to become qualified teachers, but the expense of carrying on that work is thrown upon themselves."

Eleven hundred pupils is the daily average attendance in the poor-schools adjoining Baggot Street Convent. They are, as they have been from the first, most efficiently conducted.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FIRST BRANCH—TROUBLES.

The First Branch—Dunleary, or Kingstown—The Wreck in Dunleary Harbor—The Cargo not restored to the Owners—An Excommunication—Sad Consequences—Sympathy of the Foundress enlisted—Oracular Offer of the Pastor—St. Patrick's Convent Training School for Superiors—The best Generalship sometimes fails—Opposition raised against “the new Nuns” when they began to spread—A Rescript of Indulgences—Solemn Approbation of the Holy See accorded to the Sisters of Mercy—This Favor due to the Opponents of the Institute rather than to its Friends—Troubles—Unhandsome Retort—Friends of the Mammon of Iniquity—The Foundress in danger of Arrest—Amusing Occurrences—Letter on Confirmation—On Qualifications necessary for a Sister of Mercy—On a Change of Superiors.

THE first convent which Mother McAuley founded from St. Mary's, Baggot Street, was at Kingstown, a very pretty village or town near Dublin, which exchanged its ancient name, Dunleary, for its present commonplace one when George IV. landed on its shores a few years before. It was still very generally called by its older and prettier name in 1833, when the holy foundress was asked to extend the benefits of her Institute to its poor, sick, and ignorant.

The circumstances under which this filiation was made were peculiar: In the first quarter of the present century a richly-freighted vessel had been wrecked in sight of Dunleary Harbor, and, though not a passenger was left alive to tell the fate of the crew, the cargo was, to a great extent, uninjured and could be traced to living owners. The clergy forbade their flocks to appropriate any of this rich booty, and urged the sailors and fishermen of the vicinity to assist in saving it for its owners, who would, of course, be obliged to allow a just compensation for their labor. But this rightful order had in several instances been dis-

obeyed, and the culprits refused to make restitution. The pastors were obliged to resort to very severe measures. An excommunication was threatened, and probably issued, against the plunderers. But they continued obstinate, and were rearing their children in ignorance of that religion whose precepts they refused to obey, thus separating their families in fact, if not in name, from the fold of Christ.

Archbishop Murray and several other zealous persons represented to the foundress the spiritual destitution and moral degradation of these poor creatures, who, though within a few miles of the refined capital, were leading a careless, half-savage life, as if they felt themselves beyond the pale of Christianity and civilization.

At his grace's request Mother McAuley went out to Kingstown, and, upon examination, found the reality much worse than the description. Rev. William Walsh, afterwards Archbishop of Halifax, was then stationed as curate at Kingstown, and was most zealous in endeavoring to promote the reformation of the parish. He earnestly besought her to establish a school, which she consented to do, provided she met with such co-operation as would not leave the whole expense to her. The parish priest was too old and too infirm to cope successfully with the local difficulties, and he at first refused to assist her plans except by his patronage. Ultimately he offered "to do something"—an oracular phrase which the curate somewhat liberally interpreted as a sort of promise from a man of few words, who might reasonably be expected to do more than he said; and the wretched state of many of the poor had so strongly excited her sympathy that she could not refuse to assist them. At her sole expense she purchased Sussex Place House, a beautiful residence on the beach, with ground sufficient for schools. So prosperous was the opening of this new convent that the Sisters were able, in 1834, to undertake the instruction of over three hundred poor children, and it was through the innocent hearts of these dear

little ones that they hoped to reach their hardened parents.

Sussex Place House\* was now known as St. Patrick's Convent. Six Sisters usually resided there, schools, visitation of the sick, and the instruction of adults being their chief occupations. A complete change was soon visible in the poorer classes. Their conduct became such as to justify the ecclesiastical authorities in removing the censures which had so long weighed upon them ; for they were now not only practical but fervent Catholics. Reverend Mother mentions the crowds that came to be instructed as so great that seats could not be found for them—a circumstance that afforded her immense consolation.

St. Patrick's became very useful to the foundress as a sort of training-school for those among her flock whom she selected as possessing the qualifications necessary for the irksome and responsible office of superior. Most of the earlier members who were subsequently chosen for distant foundations served here their apprenticeship to the difficult art of governing. Indeed, it came to be a generally received opinion that whoever could manage in Kingstown would succeed anywhere. But, as will be seen, even the best generalship St. Mary's could supply failed for a time here.

The establishment of the Sisters at Kingstown showed, too, that it was evidently their destiny to spread beyond St. Mary's, for now applications began to come from many quarters, which Mother McAuley was for the present unable to supply. A storm of opposition was raised against the "new nuns." Why should they spread into other places when they were neither confirmed nor approved at Rome, and had not even yet a Rule by which to live ? This was partially true. Archbishop Murray had received permission and sanction from Rome for their establishment in 1827.

\* Sussex Place House had a very conventional appearance and was close to the church, which obviated the necessity of a chaplain, as the Sisters heard Mass there every day. It used to be called the long-fronted mansion.

In June, 1830, a Rescript of Indulgences, dated May 23, 1830, had been received by the Sisterhood from Pope Pius VIII. Very Rev. Dr. Whelan, a Carmelite father, afterwards Bishop of Bombay, was the bearer of this favor. Mother McAuley was desirous of obtaining the approbation of the Holy See, but feared it was rather premature to apply for it as yet. But the opposition now raised against her Institute with such violence, and coming from parties worthy of respect—pious clergy and laity—was calculated not merely to deter postulants from joining it, but also to disturb and embarrass the consciences of those who had already made vows in it. She therefore laid the whole case before the archbishop, who, at her instance, immediately applied to Rome for a formal approbation. This was graciously granted in the form of a letter to his grace, which was received on the Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, May 3, 1835. This favor was due rather to the opponents than to the friends of the Institute, so wonderful are the ways of God. With his solemn approbation His Holiness Gregory XVI. sent his Apostolic Benediction to the foundress and her associates. The following is an extract from the document which brought such joy to the young Institute on that bright May morning, 1835 :

“A society of holy women, called SISTERS of MERCY, having been established in Dublin, the Sacred Congregation has deemed it fit to recommend and approve the same. The confirmation of the Rules and Constitutions of the same society is hereafter mentioned.

MARCH 24, 1835.

“*To the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lord, Daniel Murray, Archbishop of Dublin:*

“Your lordship will comprehend directly, without any words of mine, how the Sacred Congregation and our Most Holy Lord approve of the resolution taken by that most holy woman, Catherine McAuley, of instituting a society of women which, from the works that it prescribes to itself, is designated ‘of Mercy’; for I omit mentioning how praise-

worthy that society must be whose very work has for its object more especially to help the poor, to assist the sick, and to protect by every exercise of charity those women whose virtue is endangered.

"I should only say that from such an Institute both civil society and religion itself are likely to derive the greatest advantage. Hence the Sacred Congregation has given its highest approval to the resolution of that holy woman, and His Holiness has not only approved of the Institute of that society, but has declared it truly worthy of his paternal benevolence and of his Apostolic Benediction."

This letter, which is preserved in the archives of the parent house, is signed by the historic names, *James Philip Card. Fransoni*, prefect, and *Angelus Mai*, secretary.

This approbation, from the highest source, was inexpressibly consoling to the Sisters, and inspired them with new ardor to advance their own perfection and the interests of Jesus.

Although the eccentricities or peculiarities of the ancient pastor of Kingstown, Rev. Mr. S—, occasionally made several difficulties, yet, on the whole, things went on rather pleasantly at the Kingstown establishment for about four years. The curates, Rev. Messrs. Walsh and Kavanagh, were most kind and attentive, and took the greatest interest in the schools, which were always full to overflowing. No definite arrangement seems to have been effected regarding the school buildings. There appears to have been misunderstanding on both sides. Mother McAuley considered the pastor the debtor, and he regarded her as the responsible party. Meanwhile the debt continued to accumulate. This and other disagreeable circumstances combined to make St. Patrick's, despite the great good effected, a source of most painful anxiety to the holy foundress. It was not always easy to supply Sisters suited to the peculiarities of the place, and a change could not be made without difficulty.

Very little gratitude was shown the good mother for all she

had done for the place, and very little appreciation seemed to be made of her labors by those whom, perhaps, they most benefited. “What better use could the rich old woman make of her money?” was the rather unhandsome retort of a reverend gentleman (who had never made a similar use of his own) when the presiding Sister represented to him the great interest the foundress had taken in the Kingstown establishment, and the expense at which she had maintained it. He saw clearly enough that no better use could be made of money than to devote it to the moral, religious, and industrial training of the poor, yet he would not emulate her example. But she had now become poor. She had made unto herself friends of the mammon of iniquity. She had lent her money to the Lord. At the very period when the Kingstown incumbent accused her of hoarding up fabulous sums she was obliged, in order to build an addition to the House of Mercy, to encroach on the convent funds—a step which only an extraordinary emergency could justify. As in the case of the chaplaincy difficulties, to which we shall again refer, Archbishop Murray, the most cautious of men, declined to interfere, and Mother McAuley was obliged to consult once more an exalted friend and father, who never wearied in well-doing, especially when he could serve her or her Institute—Most Rev. Michael Blake, Bishop of Dromore. He advised her, in case Mr. S—— refused to come to any accommodation, to relinquish St. Patrick’s, for a while at least.

In 1838 legal proceedings were commenced against “Catherine McAuley, spinster,” for the recovery of the debt contracted in erecting the Kingstown schools. The dear spinster had become responsible by satisfying the claim of a poor creditor. By paying part of the debt she had acknowledged herself a debtor, or, as Mr. S—— termed it, “committed herself.”

“I am now,” she writes to a Sister, “hiding from a person who says he wants to serve a paper personally on me.

I am really afraid to stay five minutes in the parlor. Every man that appears near the premises is kept at an awful distance and subjected to a close scrutiny by my dear Sister Teresa" (the portress).

The whole affair seemed so eminently ridiculous that it furnished recreation to all the houses for many a day. Gentlemen, relatives of the Sisters, who happened to call during this crisis, were mystified at the furtive and suspicious glances of which they were the objects, and the explanations demanded before they were invited to cross the threshold. And they were amused to learn that the innocent portress, who in most instances did not know one man from another, suspected every stranger of being the dreaded process-server, and behaved accordingly. The ludicrous incidents which occurred at this period made some new recreation for the Sisters every day. "This state of things, as you may suppose," wrote Mother McAuley, "has caused more laughing than crying here."

In connection with Kingstown, as with all her other houses, the holy foundress showed her ardent love for the great Sacrament of Confirmation, and her zeal for having the candidates with whom the Sisters had to do most carefully prepared for its reception. She constantly impressed upon her children the awful importance of this sacrament as the guardian and strengthener of the precious gift of faith, and she was never absent from a confirmation administered in any department of her Institute, or failed to assist in preparing the children and adults herself, till she went to Cork the second time, September, 1837; and all the business she had to transact on that difficult foundation could not deter her from writing to the presiding Sister at Kingstown to stir up her zeal in the interest of the confirmation class :

"**MY DEAR SISTER M. ELIZABETH:** I trust in God you all continue well.

"I suppose you are preparing your children for confirma-

tion. You will not forget to make them repeat the Hymn of the Holy Ghost very often and the ejaculatory prayers. . . . You must make them understand well the nature of the sacrament, the gifts and graces it imparts—which depend so much on the preparation. Impress [on them] particularly the great necessity of a pious and good preparation, that the sacrament can be received but once, and that if the benefit be now lost they can never receive it again. I have always found this to produce good effects. Do all you can to get them to understand the nature of the retreat for ten days before ; tell them how far they can practise it ; but, above all things, [inculcate the necessity of] constant and fervent prayer. . . . I am sure you know all this, and would not fail to put it in practice ; but I like to help you.\* What a comfort it would be to me to see them all [the children] ! Give my most affectionate love to my dear Sister M. de Chantal, Sister M. Genevieve, Sister M. Ursula, and Sister Maher. I hope Lucy is getting better.

“ May God preserve and bless you all !

“ Your ever-affectionate mo’her in Christ,

“ M. C. McAULEY.

“ P.S. Sister M. Clare [Moore] desires her affectionate love to all ; also Sister M. Josephine [Warde], Sister Mary Anastasia [McGauley], and Sister M. Cecilia [Marmion]. I suppose your garden looks beautiful, as everything does at this season. My love to the children.”

The following letter, dated September 5, 1836, was probably written from Kingstown. It is a reply to a priest who, having a candidate to send, wished to hear from herself something about the qualifications generally requisite for a Sister of Mercy as regards visiting the sick. The importance Mother McAuley attaches to externals—voice, countenance, manner of reading, etc.—is highly characteristic :

“ REVEREND SIR : I have been favored with a letter from you which I should have answered immediately, but I expected the lady [to whom the letter referred] to call, and

\* Mother Elizabeth, when impressing on her Sisters in Limerick the necessity of preparing children and adults most carefully for confirmation, used to read the above letter as a sort of text for her instructions on the subject.

am only just now informed by the Sister who presides in my absence that Miss Wilson has returned to the country.

"In compliance with your desire, reverend sir, I shall submit what seems 'generally requisite for a Sister of Mercy.' Besides an ardent desire to be united to God and to serve the poor, she must feel a particular interest for the sick and dying, otherwise the duty of visiting them would become exceedingly toilsome. She should be healthy, have a feeling, distinct, impressive manner of reading,\* a mild countenance expressive of sympathy and patience; and there is so much to be acquired as to reserve and recollection in passing through the public ways, caution and prudence in the visits [to the sick, public institutions, etc.], that it is desirable they [the candidates] should begin rather young, before habits and manners are so long formed as not to be likely to alter. I beg again to remark that this is what seems generally necessary.

"I am aware that exceptions may be met, and that when there is a decided preference for the Order, and other essential dispositions, conformity in practice may be accomplished at any period of life.

"Recommending myself and community to your prayers,

"I remain, reverend sir, very respectfully, etc.,

"M. C. McAULEY."

The following will be found useful and interesting. It is an extract from a letter written to a Sister at Kingstown when a change of superiors had occurred—a circumstance which often proves a great cross, especially to the young: "I am sincerely interested for you, and would give a good deal to be able to peep in at you occasionally and see how

\* Mother McAuley valued good reading more than any other external accomplishment, and had the reading of the Sisters most carefully attended to, especially in the novitiate. She appointed spiritual reading as a community exercise, and usually read the daily lectures herself. Her own method of reading was so delightful that it rendered the most familiar subjects new to the listeners. "Whoever," says Mother M. V. Hartnett, "had the happiness of hearing her admitted that they never heard reading comparable to hers." Writing and composition came next in importance; every choir Sister was obliged to "transcribe" for a quarter of an hour, and to read aloud for the same space, daily. It would seem as though the "ologies" of our day have been fatal to fine reading and good writing, which are by no means as common among what are styled "the educated classes" as they were in Mother McAuley's time.

you walk before God on this occasion. It is of little moment, my dear child, what letters spell the name or what voice or features distinguish the person who conducts you to God in the way of your vocation. He can soon bend and change, and form and re-form, any of His creatures to fit them for the purposes He designs. You will, I know be animated and delighted at this opportunity of showing that it is God alone whom you love and serve. And then the promise made to those who follow Christ will be realized —the bitter things will be made sweet, and the sweet bitter, because they [the sweets of 'this life'] are not conformable to our dear mortified Saviour."

There is a wealth of spiritual advice in these few lines.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SUCCESS AT KINGSTOWN.

A savory Supper—"Josephine, our local Queen"—Closing of the Kingstown House—Beautiful Letter—Confidence of the Foundress in her Children—Mr. S—— invites the Sisters to return—A perplexing Business—The Sisters try again—Failure—Final Success—Like the Disagreements between Paul and Barnabas, the Kingstown Difficulties result in Good—Magdalen Asylum—St. Michael's Hospital—Death of Sister M. de Chantal—Serious Accident to the Foundress—Letter—Treatment—A broken Arm not so distressing as she always supposed it—Her last Visit to Kingstown—The first that she founded outside Dublin and the last that she visited—Special Benedictions to be expected on the Kingstown Convent.

IT used to be a joke among the earlier members how suddenly the Kingstown incumbents were usually summoned away. Once, on a great feast-day, the housekeeper had made arrangements to give the community a very savory supper; the central dish was to consist of an enormous hot cake. When all was ready a note was delivered announcing a visit from reverend mother, who made her appearance a little later. There was much speculation as to whether she meant to remove any one, and the result of their guessing was put in verse *impromptu*, but no one was able to find a rhyme for the presiding Sister's name, Mary Joseph. Mother McAuley enjoyed their perplexity for a moment, and then turned the whole occurrence into verses, the refrain of each being :

"And Josephine,  
Our local queen."

It was Sister M. Josephine Warde who was called off this time. She accompanied the foundress to St. Mary's to

prepare for the Cork foundation. The poor housekeeper was greatly distressed that the visitors could not remain to partake of her supper.

Although the foundress affected, when writing to her anxious children, to treat as a jest the legal difficulties which the Kingstown pastor allowed to assail her, yet it is certain that these trials pained her intensely. The chaplaincy affair was coeval with the Kingstown troubles, so that this was a period of extraordinary anxiety for her. While she was founding a convent in Limerick, in the autumn of 1838, arrangements were made to close St. Patrick's. As the following most beautiful letter will show, the holy mother was particularly gratified to learn with what reverence and ceremony her *locum tenens*, Sister M. Teresa White, took care that the Blessed Sacrament should be removed :

“ How can I ever sufficiently thank you, my beloved child, for the kind, cautious manner in which you communicate this painful intelligence? Above all, I bless and praise God for your recollection of the ever-adorable Sacrament. To avert this affliction we have done all that justice and prudence demand. If it must come, however, let us receive it as the holy will of God for us. It will mortify us, to be sure, but that will be salutary, please God. Be a good soldier in the hour of trial. Do not be afflicted for your poor ; their heavenly Father will provide for them, and during your whole life you will have the same opportunity of fulfilling your obligations. I charge you, my very dear child, not to be sorrowful, but rather to rejoice, if we are to suffer this most humiliating trial. God will not be angry, be assured of that ; and is not that enough ? I feel it would be giving you no consolation were I to say, ‘ God will not be displeased with you, though He may with me.’ He will not be displeased with me either, for He knows I would rather be cold and hungry than that His poor, in Kingstown or elsewhere, should be deprived of any conso-

lations in my power to afford them. But in the present case we have done all that the circumstances justified, and even more."

The confidence expressed in the affection of her young correspondent in the words, "I feel it would be giving you no consolation," etc., is very touching; and the phrase shows more eloquently than a volume could the tender, maternal love she bore her children, and the deep, reverent affection they reciprocally felt for her. For, truly, any solution of the Kingstown troubles that cast a shadow of blame on the holy foundress would have been most unwelcome to her dutiful children, who were ever eager to interpose themselves between their head and her enemies, and counted obloquy as gain if they were but fortunate enough to shield her whom they loved so dearly.

No sooner had the Kingstown community withdrawn than the people expressed so much dissatisfaction on seeing their beautiful town deprived of its convent that overtures were made to Mother McAuley for the immediate return of the Sisters. Mr. S——, above all, insisted on this, and took a great deal of trouble to induce her to yield to his entreaties. That he was a person with whom it was not easy to come to terms the following passage, in a letter written February, 1839, by Mother McAuley, will show:

"A new account from Kingstown. Rev. Mr. S—— told Father Kavanagh that if the school-house were assigned for the children to trustees the debt should be paid and a choir made in the parish church for the Sisters, if they would return. To this Father Kavanagh agreed. Mr. S—— then wrote to me, requesting that two Sisters would go out and select such portion of the church as was deemed necessary. Sisters M. Teresa [White] and Aloysia [Scott] went on the day appointed. After taking all their plans he recalled what he had agreed on, and said, in presence of Rev. Mr. Walsh, that, as he had never invited the Sisters to Kingstown, he could not be expected to do what was done for them in

other places! I cannot describe [Rev.] Mr. Kavanagh's surprise. He wrote to Mr. S——, expressing his astonishment, and showed me a copy of the letter, which was very strong indeed.

"I think it would seem like defiance to go there now, after the parish priest telling the Sisters, in presence of his curates, that he had never invited them! Sister M. Teresa could not avoid hinting that none of them were very anxious to come. It is a most perplexing business."

Finally Sussex Place House was sold and the school-debt paid. Will it be credited that poor Mr. S—— applied again for the Sisters? But the holy foundress was not at all anxious to expose them to fresh trials, and steadily refused to permit them to return unless certain conditions were complied with beforehand—a necessary precaution when dealing with a gentleman afflicted with so defective a memory. "I am really afraid," she wrote, "that the Kingstown business is going to be settled." It was settled, and the Sisters returned; but in a little while the difficulties became greater than ever, and she thought it best to relinquish Kingstown once more. But Mr. S——, who seemed unable to live "with them or without them," was suddenly seized with such zeal for his schools, now deprived of their teachers, that he besought her once more to come to his aid, and this time he enlisted on his side no less a personage than the archbishop, who informed her that he would deem it a personal favor and be greatly gratified if she could oblige him in this. Such an intimation of his grace's pleasure was a command in her eyes, and in March, 1840, she wrote to Limerick: "By the particular desire of the archbishop we are to return to Kingstown in three weeks."

The sanguine and forgiving disposition of the holy foundress appears in the fact that after all—incessant anxiety, loss of property, annoyances of every kind, and trials described by herself as "most humiliating"—she was willing to give Kingstown a third trial. And it is pleasant to add

that in the end she was able to overcome evil with good, and that the Kingstown convent, the eldest daughter of the parent house, became eminently successful. As the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas caused the Gospel to be preached in new countries, so the difficulties at Kingstown were partially the cause of the establishment of the neighboring Convent of Mercy, Booterstown, in 1838.

St. Patrick's Convent of Mercy, Kingstown, is to-day a most flourishing institution. St. Patrick's Refuge, the oldest Magdalen asylum in the country, founded in Bow Street, 1798—a disastrous year—has been transferred to Kingstown; and since this institution has fallen under the care of the Sisters of Mercy accommodations have been added for at least four times the number of penitents for which it was originally intended. Work of every kind is done by the inmates, and the institution is entirely self-supporting.

A very fine institution, St. Michael's Hospital, has been added to the benevolent works of the Sisters of Mercy, Kingstown; the founder is the present Archbishop of Dublin, who was for a long time parish priest of Kingstown. At the solemn inauguration of this hospital by Cardinal Cullen, June 12, 1877, his eminence remarked that "St. Michael's would remain a monument of the zeal, activity, and energy of the Very Rev. Mgr. Edward McCabe. Within its walls would be received people of all creeds—Jews, Presbyterians, or Protestants—in the true spirit of Catholicity; and he prayed God to provide eternal consolation and assistance for those who had so bountifully provided for the wants and sufferings of God's creatures."

Verily, the seed here sown in tears has borne abundant fruit in joy. Kingstown was associated in the mind of the holy foundress with few joys and many sorrows. It was here, October 27, 1837, that her beloved Sister, M. de Chantal McCann, the first widow who joined the Institute, died of a terrible species of typhus fever, caught among

the sick poor. Upon hearing of her illness the holy mother hurried from Cork, where she was then founding a convent; but her speed was vain, for the saintly invalid expired before she reached St. Patrick's. The devotion of this sweet young Sister to the poor endeared her in a very special manner to the holy foundress.

“Exactly the same fever,” she wrote, “which was sent by God to take our pious, valued bishop, Dr. Nolan, came, I trust, from the divine hand for our dear, innocent Sister, M. de Chantal. She had quite a saintly end, continually repeating aloud, ‘My God, I love Thee; forgive me and take me to Thyself!’ The physicians were astonished.”

While making a visit of condolence to the bereaved community a painful and dangerous accident occurred to her, which she mentions in a letter to Carlow, dated December 6, 1837 :

“I went to Kingstown to condole with the Sisters on the death of their dear, holy companion, Sister M. de Chantal. Going down to Matins, I missed the first step of the stairs, fell forward, and, in endeavoring to save my head from the window, broke my left arm across the wrist, and injured the sinews in the back of my hand so much that I am not likely to have the use of it for some months to come, if ever.”

The foundress was obliged to remain several days without undressing, the inflammation being so great that it was necessary to apply leeches constantly. But she makes very little of the pain and inconvenience of a broken arm bound up in boards, and when the first symptoms of improvement appeared she gives the good news to her anxious Carlow correspondent, though she admits that she “finds it difficult to write without the assistance of her second hand”:

“I have great hopes of getting my old companion on duty again; and I am happy to tell you from experience that a broken arm is by no means so distressing a matter as I always supposed it. However, take great care of your

bones, if you go through the new convent before the stairs are put up ; for, though not at all proportioned to the lamentations we hear on such occasions, it gives a general shock to the whole system that is not easily recovered."

Before the end of December her recovery must have been complete, for she writes : "I have been three hours walking in the snow, so I am growing young again. Eight Sisters in retreat—seven to be received and Sister M. Aloysius Scott to be professed—and so much to be done I am obliged to assist."

Mother McAuley's last visit to Kingstown occurred on her favorite Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1841, about six weeks before her happy departure from the turmoils and miseries of this weary life. After a stormy voyage from Liverpool she rested a few hours with her dear children on that day, the fourteenth anniversary of the humble beginning of her Institute, 1827—a day full of touching and holy memories for her and her children for ever. On September 25 she despatched a few lines to Carlow, from which we give an extract :

"We had a weary passage ; kept three hours waiting for the tide, and did not arrive at Kingstown till nine A.M. The poor Sisters had comfortable tea for us, and we rested then till twelve." The holy mother did not know how terribly shocked the "poor Sisters" were at the deplorable change which the few weeks of her absence in Liverpool, London, and Birmingham had wrought in her appearance. St. Patrick's was the first convent she established from Baggot Street and the last she was destined to visit. "The poor old mother-house, which had passed through so many sorrows," was about to have its greatest sorrow. It received her for the last time after a missionary journey, and never again did she leave its hallowed precincts.

The trials and crosses and difficulties which encompassed the Kingstown branch were but an earnest of its ultimate success. One cannot help feeling that many special bene-

dictions were in store for the first convent outside the parent house established by the venerated foundress, and the last sanctified by her holy presence. And, indeed, no house of the Institute has been more signally blessed than this, so plentifully watered with the tears of the dear mother-foundress.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ANCIENT DIOCESE OF MEATH.

The ancient Diocese of Meath—Clonard—St. Finan—Miss Pentony—The Mothers of the Saints—Inference—A late-flowering Plant—Sisters of Charity—Miss Pentony's Associates—The Barnwalls—Old Father Barnaby—A Lover of Peace—Death of Miss Pentony—Durrow and Kilbride—Durrow a favorite Place of Sepulture—The Holy Well of St. Columba—Efforts to establish a Convent in Tullamore—Dr. O'Rafferty introduced to Mother McAuley—She gives him a Colony—Kilkenny—The two Foundresses—Mother McAuley deprecates Party Spirit—Obligations of the Order of Mercy to its Enemies—Delightful Journey to Tullamore—Opening of the new Convent—First Accessions.

THE diocese of Meath—the largest in Ireland, being nearly co-extensive with the ancient principality of Meath—is in some respects one of the most remarkable sections of that country. There were formerly in what now constitutes but one diocese no less than eight episcopal sees, the most ancient being Clonard, founded about 530 by St. Finan, “the tutor of the saints of Ireland.”

The first convent established by reverend mother outside of Dublin and its environs was at Tullamore, in this ancient diocese. And it was at Tara, in this same diocese and county, that St. Patrick first preached the Gospel in Ireland, April 2, 433.

The foundation of the Tullamore convent was in this wise: Miss Pentony, a wealthy and charitable gentlewoman of Dublin, came to live in Tullamore in 1823, selecting this rather obscure town as a retreat in which she might, remote from a large circle of friends and acquaintances, devote her riches and whatever remained of a life now far

spent to the service of God and His poor. Scanty is the information that can now be given with certainty of this benevolent woman, but from the little we know and from the traditions of the poor it may be gathered that she was a person of wonderful zeal and sanctity. As from a single feature or member of a beautiful statue found among ruins we may picture to ourselves what the whole was when it came forth in chaste loveliness from the chisel of the sculptor, so what we know of Miss Pentony would indicate that she was one of God's hidden saints, devoted with her whole heart to charity and piety, and a providential instrument to keep the faith alive in many souls. She was a type of a class numerous, blessed be God, in Ireland during its darkest penal days—women worthy to rank with the "mothers of the Irish saints" commemorated in the ancient Gaelic manuscripts, who, in humility and obscurity, exercised an heroic apostleship when the priest was hunted like the wolf and "the schoolmaster" rarely dared to be "abroad."

The facility with which Nano Nagle, and Catherine McAuley, and other holy women found companions and patronesses in every work of mercy or philanthropy which they undertook shows that God had souls in training for these great enterprises. Miss Pentony, as regards the work which she originated in Tullamore, came rather late into the field. Born in 1749, she had fully attained the eleventh hour of life in 1823. Yet it was God's will to enable her to give twelve years of active service to His Church ere He called her to the reward prepared for those who instruct many unto justice. She was emphatically "a late-flowering plant" in the garden of God's Church, but she was not on that account less useful or less beautiful in her heavenly vocation. Eight years before Miss Pentony left Dublin (1815) Mother Augustine Aikenhead had begun the establishment of the Irish Sisters of Charity, who were now (1823) working on in their holy vocation with all the fer-

vor of a new religious congregation. The charitable woman whom God raised up to evangelize Tullamore thought of founding a convent of Sisters of Charity to attend to the training of the neglected children of the place, and prepare the sick and dying for eternity. But she did not succeed in her project, though she offered her whole fortune for its accomplishment.

Miss Pentony then tried to do in Tullamore what Mother McAuley was doing in Dublin. She associated with herself several pious and zealous young ladies, who assisted her in relieving the poor, instructing the ignorant, and visiting the sick. Among these were Miss Barnwall, Miss Locke, and Miss Delamere, who afterwards became Sisters of Mercy. One of these ladies is still living (1881). Sister M. Gertrude Barnwall died at Tullamore of dropsy (1848), in the fifty-first year of her age and twelfth of her profession. Sister M. Clare Delamere died at Kells in 1870. The name *Barnwall* appears frequently and honorably in the Catholic annals of Leinster. The family is now represented by Sir Reginald Barnwall, Crickstown Castle, County Meath, and Christopher Barnwall, Esq., Meadstown, County Meath. "Old Father Barnaby Barnwall" bore a high reputation for sanctity in bygone days. His "sayings" were famous in the county. Among "certain advices" he left for new missionaries is one which speaks volumes: "There is no nation apter to be scandalized of the carriage of religious men than the Irish; wherefore you must be very wary, for who is once spotted will never recover his honor in Ireland."

It is hardly necessary to say reverend mother was not sorry that the first subject she received in Tullamore was a Barnwall.

Miss Pentony never gave up the hope of having a convent in Tullamore, though the prospect became every year less hopeful. During her latter years she was deprived of much of the means she had laid aside to accomplish this

great desire of her heart. For some interested parties affirmed there was a slight informality in the will through which she inherited her fortune, and she lost the greater part of it rather than recur for redress to law, although eminent lawyers assured her that she might easily recover her wealth, if she would authorize them to act for her. But she was of a most peaceable disposition, and strove to live and die without having a dispute with any one.

On the eve of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, September 7, 1835, Miss Pentony passed away, full of virtues and labors, at the advanced age of eighty six. She was a woman

‘ Whose only joy was to relieve the needs  
Of wretched souls, and help the helpless poor ;  
All night she spent in bidding of her beads,  
All day in doing good and godly deeds.’

Her funeral was most numerously attended by clergy and people, rich and poor. Tears, prayers, and blessings testified the gratitude and affection of those who had been so long edified by her example and benefited by her labors.

Tullamore, which is also called Kilbride, originally formed part of Durrow, and its site or lands belonged to a favorite abbey of St. Columba. No one at all versed in Celtic hagiology can name this sacred spot without emotion. Hallowed by the footsteps of this wonderful missionary saint and passionate lover of Erin, there is a charm, a holy spell, about his once cherished retreat which may well awaken recollections more touching than those that stirred the soul of Johnson at Iona.

Durrow, like “Arran of the Saints,” has always been a favorite place of sepulture. The greenest of grass now veils its buried ruins, but the Holy Well of St. Columba still attracts the pious pilgrim as of yore. No wonder that the aged benefactress of the poor of this region chose to sleep her long, last sleep in this resting-place of saints.

When Very Rev. James O'Rafferty, who had welcomed Miss Pentony in 1823 and chanted a requiem over her in 1835, built the fine Gothic church which now revives the memory of the ancient glories of Durrow, it is but reasonable to believe that his thoughts and prayers reverted to his dear old friend and benefactress, awaiting a glorious resurrection in the holy soil beneath.

In the winter of 1835-1836 this zealous clergyman set himself vigorously to work to realize the project of Miss Pentony by bringing a religious community to Tullamore. He went to Dublin and introduced himself to Mrs. Aikenhead as the spiritual director of the late Miss Pentony, and the person specially charged with the execution of that lady's benevolent wishes ; and in this double capacity he asked for a small colony of the Sisters of Charity. But the foundress of this young congregation, judging that the amount left by the deceased was too small to support a foundation, refused to send her children to poor Tullamore.

This was in accordance with the usual practice of that venerated lady. "For no reason," says her biographer, "would she make a foundation, unless sufficient means were forthcoming for the support of the nuns." And elsewhere Mrs. Aikenhead herself explains : "A house with proper title-deeds, rent free, furnished or an equivalent, besides maintenance for four members, is considered a foundation."\*

But poor Dr. O'Rafferty was not the less disappointed because all this seemed just and right. He was leaving Stanhope Street Convent, sad and dejected, when some good spirit inspired him to go to St. Teresa's, Clarendon Street, and tell his troubles to Miss Pentony's friend, Very Rev. Father O'Hanlon, Provincial of the Carmelites. Father O'Hanlon had been spiritual director of the Baggot Street community for the past eight years, and was destined to

\* *Life, etc., of Mary Aikenhead.*

continue in the same relation to the institution till his holy death, 1863. The Sisters of Mercy were under obligations of every kind to this venerable priest, than whom, wrote Mother McAuley, "there never was a more disinterested friend." He consoled and reassured the Tullamore priest by introducing him to the humble and almost unknown originator of a kindred institution.

An interview with Mother McAuley made him account his recent loss a gain. No doubt the fact that she was able and willing to do what he desired was not an inconsiderable factor in the fascination she ever afterwards exercised upon him. To the day of his death, some twenty years later, he was wont to speak of her with enthusiasm. "I was perfectly charmed with that holy woman," he would say. "I can never forget her kindness, her wonderful grace of manner." These pleasant impressions must have been mutual. For the zealous advocate of the poor and illiterate had no sooner explained the sad spiritual condition of his united parishes of Durrow and Kilbride, and the urgent need he had of those mediums of beneficence whom he always styled, in his stately, old-fashioned way, "religious ladies," than she offered, subject to the archbishop's approval, to give him a colony. The poverty of the place and the scantiness of the provision stipulated for her children were but additional inducements. "If we do not take Tullamore," said she, "no other community will." She even set aside for a time an application made by a bishop for a wealthy locality to give the preference to the generous incumbent of Tullamore.

We may say, in passing, that, so far as can now be ascertained, the "wealthy locality" was Kilkenny, that handsome, French-looking town, which boasts of fire without smoke, water without mud, and streets paved with marble. It is the episcopal town of the diocese of Ossory, and was then the residence of her great friend, Most Rev. William Kinsella,

Although the state of the poor in Tullamore, and the wonderful story of Miss Pentony's labors and sacrifices, touched Mother McAuley to the heart, it may be, nevertheless, that the foundation business of that place would not have been so speedily concluded but for the earnest advocacy of Father O'Hanlon, to whom she could refuse no request, whose penitent Miss Pentony had been for many years, and whose friend she remained to the last.

Mary Aikenhead and Catherine McAuley were at that time in Dublin as two suns in the same firmament. Each, against her will, had her party, but that of the former was by far the more influential. Even their physical characteristics were contrasted, and some preferred the spirited countenance of Mary Aikenhead, with its warm tints and melting dark eyes, to the meek, blonde face of her unconscious rival, full of sweetness and strength, and the deep blue orbs that spoke of heaven within. Perhaps both were equally beautiful, though as different in type as in character. It used to be said jocosely that the gentlemen all preferred Mother McAuley's style ; and we have the evidence of that acute observer, Mgr. O'Brien, Dean of Limerick, that she carried her saintly grace and beauty into old age—a statement which those of her children who were personally acquainted with her have eloquently corroborated, though they, of course, could not be considered unprejudiced witnesses. Certain it is that interested parties sought to create a species of rivalry between these two illustrious personages, the consequences of which were of terrible import to Mother McAuley, and lay at the root of the Kingstown difficulties and the chaplaincy troubles.

“The Institute of the Sisters of Mercy, which was formed into a religious congregation about the time when Mrs. Aikenhead and her communities had been for fifteen years engaged in active work, was regarded by certain friends of the latter with anything but favor. A good deal of idle and mischievous gossip was indulged in ; the two institutes

became the subject of comparison and contrast; and a rivalry which never was contemplated by the admirable women who were at the head of these congregations was well-nigh established by injurious partisans in the outside ranks."

This unhappy partisanship was nearing its height in 1836, when Dr. O'Rafferty applied for his colony. There were then six houses of Sisters of Charity and two of Sisters of Mercy. No one more deeply deplored the false zeal of several of her friends than Mother Aikenhead.\* It is remarkable that this venerated woman dedicated one of her convents to Our Lady of Mercy.

These petty developments of party spirit were repeated in miniature in several other places where Mother McAuley established convents, notably in Limerick and Galway. She always instructed the Sisters never to take part in anything of the kind, to discourage such injudicious partisanship when manifested in their own interest, and to appear unconscious of anything said against themselves or their Institute. Indeed, they could not be blind to the fact that its enemies had heretofore proved its best benefactors, for it was to them that it owed its speedy Approbation by the Holy See, and later the Confirmation of its Rules and Constitutions. So true is it that "all things work together unto good for those that love God."

However, the Order of Mercy, though represented only by two houses, one of which was in a tottering condition, as has been shown, was now fairly launched upon the sea

\* Mother Aikenhead wrote as follows, about this time, to the superior of one of her convents :

"Let us take care [beware, I suppose] of every illusion of false zeal or false love of our own Institute. Both [Orders] are intended for the same great end of promoting the glory of our Heavenly Father and the good of the poor. We cannot promote either if charity does not reign in our hearts. All other feelings merge in self; and miserable earthly preference for self will banish the divine Spirit from us. Let us remember that no effort of human exertion could succeed in forming their [the Sisters of Mercy's] Institute, if God had not assisted; and should we presume to wish His favors to be confined only to ourselves?" (*Life of Mary Aikenhead*).

of this world. A child who is born and lives has to grow. And here, indeed, was no barren fig-tree. There was some little excitement when reverend mother announced that Tullamore was accepted; but though separation from her was the lot the Sisters feared most, yet every one volunteered for the new house, thus leaving her at liberty to choose the most desirable. Her mother-assistant and first companion, Sister Marianne Doyle, who, except for the little time she presided at Kingstown, had lived with her constantly for nine years, and who, it will be remembered, had been professed with her at George's Hill Convent, December 12, 1831, was named superior of the Tullamore foundation—a great loss to the young Institute, and a painful separation for the holy foundress. But for new establishments she always selected the most experienced and the most capable, no matter what inconvenience to herself the loss of such members entailed. Sister Mary Teresa Purcell, a novice about to be professed, was also named, and Mother M. Clare Moore, who subsequently established the Order in Cork, London, and many other places, and Sister Mary Agnes Macaulay, niece to the foundress, were lent until their services could be dispensed with. Dr. O'Rafferty came to Dublin to conduct his new flock to their future home. Father O'Hanlon, deeply interested in this first filiation of the convent with which he was so intimately connected, kindly offered to accompany the party to Tullamore. He had, besides, a longing desire to witness the scene and the fruits of the labors of his deceased old friend, and to kneel by her grave in holy Durrow, gratified to be able to manifest in this way his undying friendship for so holy a woman.

There was some discussion as to the best mode of covering the distance between Dublin and Tullamore—something over fifty miles—and the packet-boat was finally selected. Ten years before the foundress had had a taste of this mode of travelling when she crossed the great lime-

stone plain between Dublin and the Shannon to be present at the reception of her dear friend, Fanny Tighe, in 1826, at the Galway Presentation Convent.

This plain was intersected by two canals, the Royal and the Grand, and wayfarers often preferred this mode of conveyance to the heavy old stage-coach, the time-honored predecessor of our elegant Pullman. In fine weather and with a pleasant party the covered barge and the bright water-way with its varied scenery had many advantages over the uneasy, lumbering mail-coach and the dusty roads. It was easy to get on in conversation before the ever-changing panorama on either side, in which legend, religious or romantic, gave a story to raths, castles, pillar-stones, Celtic crosses, cathairs, abbeys, and round towers. We give these details because Mother McAuley's daughters will like to learn how she traversed the great central plain which was the highway to most of her houses.

Early on Thursday morning, April 21, our party took the "Grand Canal" at Portobello harbor and began to move almost imperceptibly towards their destination. The pious pilgrims talked in the cabin, and walked on deck, and made their spiritual exercises until dinner-time, when they partook of the frugal repast the company provided for them; after which they went on deck again and admired the green fields and the old cemeteries dotted with ruined monasteries, and the handsome country-seats that here and there enlivened the soft, still landscape. They were cheered by the dual note of the cuckoo, that "wandering voice," and the blithe songs and shrill chirps of the more sociable birds, issuing from the golden laburnum and the fragrant hawthorn, and from many a stately oak and graceful elm, as their ark "made haste slowly" through cornfields, and meadows, and the embankment of locks here and there, across the plains of Dublin, Kildare, and King's County, on that pleasant spring day cooled by April showers. Later in life Mother McAuley, who travelled in all sorts of

weather and was always pressed for time, found the packet slow and inconvenient. It took a whole day to travel a distance now made in less than two hours. Towards the close of her life railroad-travelling was beginning to be introduced, and few welcomed its increased speed more heartily than she did.

It was late in the evening when they reached Tullamore. Miss Barnwall, who had put in a good novitiate under Miss Pentony, joined them immediately; Miss Locke and Miss Delamere quickly followed. On Sunday, April 24, the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph, the house was blessed and dedicated to St. Joseph, and the duties of the Institute were discharged for the first time outside the archdiocese of Dublin. All this occurred in the sixth year of the episcopate of Most Rev. John Cantwell, Bishop of Meath, whose entreaties for a branch of the new Order were scarcely less urgent than those of the zealous incumbent of "Durrow and Kilbride," Very Rev. James O'Rafferty.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HOLY GROUND.

Holy Ground—"Ditches full of Scholars"—Persistent Law-breakers—Maria Edgeworth—Bishop Plunket—The Rookery—Rustic Ovation—Great Interest taken by Dr. O'Rafferty—Profession—Father Murtagh—Tullamore a great travelling Centre—Pension-School—Boys' School—Sunday-School—A Postulant of Seventy-four—Wearing the Crucifix in the Cincture—Letter—Zeal of Dr. O'Rafferty for the new Convent—The dear, quiet little Sister who would neither write nor speak until obliged to do so.

THE place upon which reverend mother now stood was truly holy ground, sanctified by recollections of a glorious past which clung to it in its decadence, and which were to be revived, it was fondly hoped, by a new race of saintly personages not wholly unworthy of companionship with those who had blessed and brightened the days of yore. The people among whom the Sisters were now called to labor had worshipped God in mud-hovels, under mass-bushes, and beneath the friendly shelter of pillar-stones and double ditches. Illiteracy was more common among them than ignorance, and yet, in a quiet way, they had been most persistent law-breakers in the article which made it felony or death for the Irish Catholic to teach or to learn. Arthur Young mentions as one of the "sights" of his travels through Ireland in 1740 "ditches full of scholars." And in his *History of Kerry* Mr. Smith says somewhat reproachfully that "the lower orders in Ireland have often a greater knowledge of classics than the better sort in other places."

That the thirst for learning was strong in Royal Meath appears conclusively from the fact that there were two hundred and thirty-six schools in the diocese as early as 1788—mostly “hedge-schools,” no doubt, in which Latin and “figures” were the principal branches taught. When Most Rev. Dr. Plunket made his annual visitation of Tullamore, then (1788) a mere village, he found four schools in operation. This worthy successor of the apostles, who governed the diocese of Meath from 1779 to 1827, founded at Navan a diocesan seminary which is still in existence. He must have been regarded as an authority on educational questions in those days, since we find no less a personage than Maria Edgeworth telling his lordship, in a letter dated August 14, 1807, that she wishes to point out one advantage\* of the system of education pursued by the Jesuits, and requesting him to look in his library for a few books she wished to borrow “for a work we are writing on education.”

Patrick Joseph Plunket had not only labored but also suffered in the cause of education. No Catholic youth could at this period *legally* receive a Catholic education in Ireland, and it was *illegal* to go abroad for educational purposes. So severely were these laws enforced in the days of Bishop Plunket’s boyhood that when his rudimentary education was completed—by stealth—his guardians, who designed him for the priesthood, had to apprentice him to a merchant in Dublin, and it was this obliging gentleman who sent the youth to France “on mercantile business.” Thus he evaded the law and eluded the vigilance of the government. The mitre was conferred on him abroad, and he returned bishop of his native diocese. His death was deplored as a national calamity. Dr Logan, who succeeded him, died in a few years, and was succeeded by Dr.

\* “I wish,” says Miss Edgeworth, “to point out the advantage that resulted from the careful manner in which the Jesuits noted characteristic anecdotes of their pupils and studied the talents and dispositions of the youth committed to their charge.”

Cantwell, the first prelate outside of Dublin to establish the Sisters of Mercy in his diocese.

Speaking of the ancient Irish, Dr. Newman says : " It is impossible not to admire and venerate a race which displayed such inextinguishable love of science and letters." This remark cannot certainly be accounted flattery if applied to Royal Meath in modern times.

In the *Commons Journal*, 1769, there is an entry recording complaints made to Parliament " that a great number of schools were dispersed in different parts of the kingdom, under the tuition of popish masters, contrary to the *sense* of several acts of Parliament " as well as the *letter*.

Perhaps every ecclesiastic in Ireland, and not a few fervent seculars, might have pleaded guilty in this article.

It may well be believed that the holy foundress was not unmindful of the beautiful traditions of the ancient palatinate upon which she bestowed her daughters in the spring of 1836, and that she did not fail to exhort them never to be unmindful of the great works of their predecessors in the field of Catholic education, or unworthy of the glorious example of those great souls of whom the world was not worthy, and who literally knew how to " persevere under chastisement."

The neat and pleasant town of Tullamore, on the Clodagh, though rebuilt by the Earl of Charleville, owed much of its importance to the Grand Canal, which passes directly through it. It contained over 5,000 inhabitants, nearly all Catholics. The house which Miss Pentony left for the purpose was used as a convent, but it soon proved too small and inconvenient for the numbers that flocked to it. It was a singular old house, and used to be called " the Rookery." It would have been useful as a place of concealment in penal times, and perhaps often did duty as such; and this hypothesis might throw some light on its peculiar architecture. There were crooked corridors with unexpected steps here and there, dead-walls, narrow win-

dows, darkness where light would be agreeable, and good light nowhere. One of the Sisters, whose ideas of spaciousness in convents nearly coincided with those of St. Peter of Alcantara, was not displeased at the straitness of the cells and parlors, though it was not pleasant to be obliged to grope along the passages, always fearful of tumbling over some invisible step. "Our rooms are so small that two cats could scarcely dance in any of them," wrote the foundress in a pleasant letter to Dublin. Even cats, despite their proverbial agility, would have found their movements impeded if they had tried many figures in the close, crooked apartments of this oddly-constructed mansion.

Since that bright, sunny 21st of April when the people came far outside the town to welcome "the holy women from Dublin," the history of the Tullamore convent has been one of progress. Of those who were the objects of that rustic ovation not one remains to-day. Bishop Cantwell and his vicar, Dr. O'Rafferty, and the provincial of the Carmelites, Very Rev. Redmond Joseph O'Hanlon; Mother McAuley and her beloved children, Mother Mary Anne Doyle, Mother Clare Moore, Mother Teresa Purcell, and her sweet and animated niece and name-child, Sister M. Agnes Macaulay—all have passed away. But under their zealous successors the good work goes bravely on, and the spirit of the holy foundress lives in her children of to-day.

Under God the prosperity of the Tullamore house was in a great measure due to the indefatigable exertions of Dr. O'Rafferty, whose interest in it never flagged. He watched over its well-being even in the minutest details, and was particularly exact as to the admission of subjects, that they should be thoroughly educated and possess competent means. He began in 1837 to build a convent and schools, and until the day of his lamented death, June 22, 1856, he continued the chief friend, promoter, and guardian of the advancement of the community.

Mother McAuley remained with the Sisters for about six

weeks. Sister Mary Teresa Purcell was professed May 27, 1836, and soon after appointed mother-assistant. A community was rapidly formed, the first seven who entered being professed after six months' postulantship and one year's novitiate, as was the custom previous to the Confirmation of the Rule, 1841.

Rev. Walter Murtagh was appointed spiritual director. He warmly admired and deeply venerated the holy foundress, whom he deemed one of the greatest saints given to the Church of his country since the days of St. Brigid. It was to a great extent owing to his exertions that the convent was established so speedily after Miss Pentony's death. "He was most profuse in his gifts," say the Annals, "and among them was the *cow*" which created so much amusement as the first live stock in the Order, and was frequently named in the early correspondence between Tullamore and Dublin.

In a small way Tullamore was a great travelling centre. The Grand Canal, which was then the chief mode of gaining access to the inland towns, runs, or rather creeps, through the town, and people came from all parts of the surrounding country to take the canal, or, as it was called, "the Grand." Owing to this circumstance the holy foundress often glided into Tullamore. As it was right on her way to several of the houses which she subsequently founded, as Cork, Limerick, Birr, Charleville, and Galway, it enjoyed the great advantage of being frequently visited by her.

On one of these visits Dr. O'Rafferty signified his desire that the Sisters should open a pension-school for children of the wealthier classes whose parents would not suffer them to go to a free, or, as they styled it, a charity school. He was so delighted with the progress of the poor-schools that he thought it a pity any class of his parishioners should be deprived of the education and superior training the nuns could bestow. He was anxious that all his children should be benefited by contact with the "religious ladies,"

as he always styled the Sisters in his lofty, dignified way.

On this important point reverend mother's views entirely coincided with his, and it was in Tullamore, and with her fullest sanction, that schools of this class were first undertaken by her Institute, 1836. It would be difficult to exaggerate the benefits which the pension-school conferred on Tullamore and its vicinity. Though the Order was founded specially for the poor, Mother McAuley was desirous that her children should aid and serve every class as circumstances might allow. And she frequently explained that the three objects peculiarly characteristic of her Institute—namely, the education of poor girls, the visitation of the sick, and the protection of distressed women of good character—were not intended to exclude other good works, but only to have the preference and precedence. She particularly desired that the Sisters should train and educate women, young and mature, and to this end she inserted a remarkable passage in the Rule: "The Sisters shall feel convinced that no work of charity can be more productive of good to society or more conducive to the happiness of the poor than the careful instruction of women," of any class, "since whatever be the station they are destined to fill their example and advice will always possess influence, and wherever a religious woman presides peace and good order are generally to be found."

In the course of time Dr. O'Rafferty wished to extend the benefits of the superior instruction given to the girls to at least small boys, and a select school was opened for them also, which soon had an attendance of two hundred and fifty. Immense poor-schools, and an infant-school set down as having one hundred and fifty babies, were subsequently erected. The average daily attendance in these schools exceeds nine hundred. A Sunday-school followed for grown persons and others obliged to work during the week, in which hundreds who have no other opportunity

learn to read and write. Owing to the importance placed by the foundress on developing a taste for useful and interesting reading in all who come within the sphere of her children's influence, libraries are almost always attached to each department. From all these schools hundreds are provided with situations as teachers, governesses, seamstresses, and servants of every description. The visitation of the sick, the prisons, and other public institutions absorbs much of the time of the Tullamore community. Since 1836 over one hundred young ladies have become Sisters of Mercy in this house, and the Necrology makes mention of a postulant, Sister M. Elizabeth Hoey, who entered the novitiate in her seventy-fourth year, and after seven years, during which she edified all by her piety and her zeal in performing the works of mercy, died a most holy death in her eighty-first year.

A custom which has since become general in the Institute—that of wearing a small crucifix in the cincture—originated during Mother McAuley's first visit to Tullamore. Sister M. Teresa Purcell, at her profession, happened inadvertently to place in her cincture the crucifix she always wore suspended from her neck. The foundress was charmed with the effect, and remarked that it would be well to adopt this mode of wearing the crucifix which the Sisters of Mercy always have near at hand to be presented to the sick and dying whom they instruct, assist, and console.

In the following interesting letter Mother Marianne Doyle describes a reception of postulants which occurred in the newly-founded house, or rather in the adjacent church :

“ MY DEAR REVEREND MOTHER : Knowing how anxious you will be to hear that our ceremony went on happily, I am anxious to give you an early account, lest the papers should get the start of me. At two o'clock the procession entered the church. The crowd was truly awful, yet wonderful order and quiet prevailed. We had nothing to regret but your absence, which I felt the

more as I know how delighted you would be to hear the objects of our Order so beautifully described in a sublime sermon by Very Rev. Father Curtis, S.J., rector of Tullabeg College. I wish I could give you some idea of it. His text was : This is true religion : to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world.

“Reviewing nearly every Order in the Church, he introduced the Trappists, who were driven out of France, and to whom some Protestant gentlemen had given tracts of land so barren that neither the avarice of the rich nor the misery of the poor could induce them to break the soil. He described the fertile appearance now presented where for ages no sound had been heard but the whistling of the wind or the scream of the bird of prey. In that once desolate spot a hundred voices now sing the praises of God.

“He described the Order of Mercy for the redemption of captives, telling how its members bound themselves by vow, should gold fail, to lay their consecrated hands on the chains of the captives and become slaves in their stead. He pictured the Alps covered with unthawing snow, where the wild beast could not dwell, and the Brother of St. Bernard, accompanied by his faithful dog, seeking the perishing travellers. In the most appropriate language he introduced whatever is most attractive in each Institute, ending with the Order of Mercy for the redemption, not of captive bodies, but of captive souls, leaving nothing unsaid that was calculated to fix a preference in the hearts and judgments of all present for the Order of Mercy as established in our own country.

“He complimented the bishop and Dr. O’Rafferty in the strongest terms, though he said he was restrained by their presence. He could not, he said, avoid picturing to himself a future day when some parent would point out to his child the edifice about to be erected, and say : At such a period a prelate ruled this diocese whose virtue added lustre to his mitre, who restored religious worship in this part of Ireland to a degree of splendor to which for ages it had been a stranger ; and a subordinate pastor ruled this town who delighted in acts of benevolence. It was such a bishop, it was such a pastor, that introduced the Sisters of Mercy residing in that convent.

“ He exhorted the immense multitude never to prove ungrateful for such a blessing. He spoke of Abraham supplicating God not to destroy the sinful city if ten just souls were found therein. He mentioned the cholera which had lately desolated their town, saying that if God in His justice should again visit His people for their sins the new convent would be like a tower before Him to remind Him of His MERCY, which its title proclaims, and upon which He would look with more complacency than on the rainbow which He Himself had formed.

“ Dear Reverend Mother, I hope you will recommend Dr. Curtis to the prayers of the Sisters. He deserves to be enrolled among the warmest friends and most zealous advocates of our Institute.

“ The new convent is going up rapidly. Father O’Rafferty is constantly on the spot, even at six in the morning.”

This letter is endorsed by reverend mother: “Very well done by our dear, quiet little Sister Doyle, who would neither write nor speak till she was obliged [to do so].”

## CHAPTER X.

### LETTERS OF THE FOUNDRESS.

Characteristics of the Letters of the Foundress—Opinion of Mgr. O'Brien  
—*Sayings*, etc., of the Foundress—Her exalted but orthodox and simple Teaching—Letters to Tullamore—The Archbishop visits Tullamore—Letter worthy of St. Teresa—Progress of St. Joseph's—Constantine Molloy, Esq.—Description of the new Convent in Tullamore—Monument to Dr. O'Rafferty—Bishop Cantwell, the Patriot-Prelate.

WITH the Tullamore foundation began the lively correspondence which the holy foundress kept up with her absent children until a few days before her translation to the better land. Very Rev. Richard Baptist O'Brien, Dean of Limerick, who saw a few of her letters, remarks :

“ From the letters which have been preserved we may easily see what a treasure the Church in general would possess if a collection of her writings could be obtained. The communications . . . pointing out the connection human efforts have with the work of God, and the way to employ trials, contradictions, and sufferings, in order to give them their place in the economy of God's government, are beautiful expositions of the thoughts of an interior soul, and indicate a virtue quite kindred to that of the great saints of the Church.”

The *Sayings*, etc., of Mother McAuley which have been published since the above was written, and many letters of hers in her *Life*, as well as those we publish in this work, hitherto for the most part inedited, fully bear out the observation of her ever-faithful and enthusiastic friend, the Dean of Limerick.

Perhaps all her letters will be discovered in the course of time. Her correspondents, who have now nearly all passed away, preserved every line of hers with jealous and holy care. But the Sisters, going forth from the houses in which these treasures were preserved, did not always scruple to abstract them as relics of their beloved and revered mother-foundress. Hence the difficulty of making a complete collection; though it has been our good fortune to be the medium of putting the greater number of them within the reach of her four thousand spiritual daughters.

The prevailing characteristics of these letters are good sense, solid piety, intense love and compassion for the suffering and the ignorant, gratitude for the smallest acts of kindness done to her or hers, with holy and tender friendship for those united to her by spiritual kinship. Dashed off, as they were, in moments snatched from most absorbing occupations—some written in the stillness of night, some at the couch of a dying Sister, some in the solitude of retreat, some in the mirthful recreation hour—they may be regarded as a compendium of her history and the history of her Institute from 1836 to 1841, the more authentic because from her own pen. Intended for no eyes save those of the beloved friends to whom they were addressed, they are often strictly confidential, and the calm, dignified foundress seems lost in the weak woman oppressed, and all but crushed, beneath her many crosses. They show her to have been thoroughly unselfish, and to have been endowed with that imperturbable patience, and even joy, under suffering which belong only to the higher paths of the spiritual life. The least troubles of her spiritual children have her warm, ready sympathy, even when her own heart seems almost broken. She first grieves with them, and then directs their thoughts to the holy motives of consolation which faith proposes. In only one letter of hers, out of more than a hundred which the writer has copied, is there a trace of severity. As a whole, these letters are exceedingly valuable to her

children as containing her views on many questions—views which only require to be known in order to become law to them. Her modes of transacting business, too, are inestimable as an example to the inexperienced. Always calm, moderate, and generous in her dealings, willing to forego every other advantage to secure peace and charity, they show her to have been large-minded and many-sided in a very unusual degree. They are never dull, but always bright and cheerful as her nature, and not by any means devoid of humor. The Celtic fire of her character, invariably controlled but never extinguished, appears in the very handwriting, which is rather vaguely described by the accomplished Miss Agnew as “peculiar.” Unlike ladies in general, she never crosses her letters and scarcely ever adds a postscript; she uses good black ink, and her handwriting is perfectly legible. Her letters are always clear, forcible, and to the purpose. In a literary point of view some of them would rank high, and there are passages, especially in her letters of condolence, which are perhaps unsurpassed in beauty and pathos by anything of the kind in the English language.

We give here some specimens of the pleasant correspondence between Mother McAuley and her Tullamore children :

“ST. MARY’S, DUBLIN, Dec. 13, 1836.

‘MY DEAR SISTER MARY TERESA: I have just had the great pleasure of seeing Dr. O’Rafferty and receiving your letter. Indeed I am heartily sorry to hear of Rev. Father Murtagh’s illness, and earnestly hope God will soon restore him. We have been seriously alarmed about dear Sister Lubé, and we thought we were going to pay our annual tribute to the tomb. But this day there is, thanks be to God! a more favorable opinion, though strong symptoms of rapid consumption appeared. Her brother appointed Dr. Graves to visit her, and his treatment has been quite different from what we have seen on similar melancholy occasions. So far it has been won-

derfully successful, and we have great hope. She is now so much affected by mercury that a decided opinion cannot be formed for some days. I am sure you will pray in choir\* for her recovery, as we do.

“Poor Sister Teresa has been ill, but not dangerously so ; your old mother coughing away and in high spirits ; Sister M. Clare’s cough not gone ; all the rest well. Our last addition is very pleasing and quite strong—equal to Sister Cecilia [Marmion] in music, and just the size of Sister Margaret Marmion, whose child she is. I am delighted to hear that his grace called to see you ; it was a comfort to *her reverence*, I am sure. Dr. O’Rafferty gives a good account of you all and hopes you will multiply fast.

“I shall be anxious to hear of Father Murtagh, and beg you to let me know how he is. Remember me most affectionately to all [the Sisters], including their good mother, in which [affectionate remembrances] I am very numerously joined.

“Believe me, dear Sister M. Teresa, most truly, etc., etc.,  
“M. C. McAULEY.”

The Father Murtagh whose illness reverend mother deplores happily recovered, but her children did not long enjoy his ministrations. In March, 1837, he was promoted to the pastorship of Eglish, where she met him on her journey to Birr in December, 1840, as we shall relate more fully when we describe the Birr foundation.

Mother Marianne, whom the foundress playfully styles *her reverence*, was greatly gratified at the visit from Archbishop Murray, to which allusion is made in the letter. The “child” of Sister Margaret was probably the amiable Sister M. Aloysius Scott. In conventional parlance the last postulant is the “child” of her immediate predecessor, who is expected to be her guide, show her through the convent, tell her of the minor regulations, etc., for the first few days.

\* Three times a day public prayers are said in choir for any member of the community who may be confined to her room by illness, also for Sisters in retreat for reception or profession. The prayers used on these occasions were composed by the holy foundress.

In the following letter, which is worthy of St. Teresa, reverend mother rejoices to find her correspondent as disinterested as herself in the matter of admitting to the convent persons poorly dowered with this world's goods when otherwise suitable :

“ MY DEAR SISTER M. TERESA : I congratulate you on your happy increase [in numbers], which you and I love so much that we will never frighten away a candidate because she has not a bag of money. We will sooner give her half our own share than not multiply. The Lord and Master of our house is a faithful provider. Let us never desire more than enough ; He will give us that and a blessing. Sister M. Cecilia looks forward with delight to the time of seeing you. Remember me affectionately to Father Murtagh, and believe me your attached mother in Christ,

“ M. C. McAULEY.”

Mother Teresa Purcell had been novice-companion to Mother M. Cecilia Marmion, and they were special friends, and corresponded till the death of the latter, September 14, 1849. Both filled the office of mother-superior at the time of their respective deaths. Mother M. Teresa Purcell died at Tullamore, March 28, 1853, having governed the community for ten years, during which she proved herself a most capable superior. Mother Cecilia is the only reverend mother who died at Baggot Street Convent besides the holy foundress.

In another letter to the same, Mother McAuley writes :

“ Your very interesting young friend called yesterday. I should indeed feel most happy to forward her views, but must have more certainty of the establishment she mentioned, which is only in prospect at present. One year's novitiate here would, I know, be a most useful preparation, as the more experience we acquire the more capable [we become] of discerning deficiency and making some improvement.

“ Our novitiate goes on very well now, thank God ! My poor Sister M. Cecilia would have been delighted to go to

Tullamore, but Father O'Hanlon said—what I knew, of course—that there was not room; and to me it [her going] would be a great relief, for Sister M. di Pazzi would never make the least objection—for what reason I know not, but she objects to a move anywhere else. When Carlow was mentioned to Sister M. Aloysius Scott as near her native air Sister M. di Pazzi begged she might be sent to Tullamore. I believe she thinks there is more of our first fervor there than anywhere else.

“We have a little trial now—a dear Sister in fever; the symptoms are good, thanks be to God! This is the sixth day. I expect a summons to Birr when Father Mathew appoints his day to preach.

“I have this moment received the enclosed from Sister M. Cecilia. If we return by Tullamore could we get four beds? It seems a most unreasonable thing [to ask]. Two Sisters go from this [Dublin], and two there [Birr] are to return. My cough remains as constant as your sweet little mother's.

“Give my most affectionate love to all, and believe me your ever faithfully attached

“M. C. McAULEY.”

The above is illustrative of a pretty little trick of the venerated foundress of liking to repeat to people, for their pleasure or encouragement, all the nice things she heard about them.

In a letter to Carlow, dated June, 1838, she gives an item of Tullamore news: “Mr. Molloy, a wealthy and pious Catholic of Tullamore, has purchased a house near the new convent for a hospital. The Sisters are to have a passage to it through the garden. Such is the account Sister Mary Anne gives me, to which she adds: ‘Notwithstanding all our seeming prosperity, I am gray with care.’ She is what I call *doing the humble*, and greatly afraid of that cunning thief, *vainglory*.”

The above benefactor was Constantine Molloy, Esq., of provincial celebrity, and a representative man among the Catholics of Leinster. He was then about seventy. On one occasion, in the days of mud-cabins and mass-fields,

when savage yeomanry roamed through his native county and threatened with a possible death any one whom they should find worshipping God in the old way, Molloy and other youths formed themselves into a body-guard, and, taking their stand before the hovel that served for a chapel, threatened to shoot any one who should dare to interrupt the sacred rites. Nor was this the only valorous deed which made the people look on doughty "Con Molloy" as a hero. This fine Catholic family was soon well represented in the cloisters of Tullamore.

Reverend mother's letters to her other convents frequently give items of news from Tullamore, where, she says, "all goes on well." In giving her Limerick children some account of the terrific storm, known as "the big wind," which occurred in January, 1839, she says: "The chimneys of the new convent in Tullamore were blown down; the old one and the Sisters safe, thank God!" In a letter from Birr to Carlow, December 27, 1840, she writes: "We travelled to Tullamore on Saturday. The new convent is a beautiful edifice. I had no idea of its extent. The staircase is the finest I ever saw; the community-room larger than ours; the infirmary as large—thirty cells—and water brought through the whole house by conductors, so that a pipe can be put anywhere; the school-rooms are very fine and connected with the convent.

"They are a grand tribute to religion and a very handsome sight from the canal-boat; indeed, they are quite an ornament to the town. I am sure God is preparing a distinguished place in heaven for the generous, benevolent priest who was so instrumental in erecting them. If I said more it would not be too much. The new convent will last for centuries."

The generous, benevolent priest was not in the way of receiving a distinguished place in heaven till about sixteen years later, when the Sisters lost in him their chief friend, father, and benefactor. His remains repose in holy Dur-

row, not far from those of his early friend, Miss Pentony —that obscure but illustrious woman who inspired so many of his saintly deeds. A marble slab in the Tullamore church tells of his zeal for the well-being of the “religious ladies” whose labors he so highly prized :

THE VERY REVEREND JAMES O'RAFFERTY, P.P. OF TULLAMORE  
AND V.G. OF MEATH,

Died June 22, 1857, in the seventy-eighth year of his age and the thirty-eighth of his pastoral charge.

This church enlarged and decorated ; the massive Gothic church at Durrow, beneath which his remains are deposited ; the beautiful MERCY CONVENT, with the extensive range of schools for both sexes adjacent, are splendid memorials of his enlightened zeal.

Dr. O’Rafferty was one of the exceedingly small number of priests who pass the golden jubilee of their priesthood. He was fifty-one years in the ministry, of which he spent nearly thirty-eight as pastor of Tullamore.

An equally enthusiastic friend of the venerated foundress was Most Rev. Dr. Cantwell. This meek and zealous successor of Cormac and Columba was known for more than a generation as the Patriot-Prelate. He survived till 1866. The deep reverence and warm friendship of the foundress for this holy bishop descended as heirlooms to her children.

## CHAPTER XI.

### TULLAMORE CONVENT.

Mother Doyle—Tullamore and Carlow—Mother McAuley's Delight and Gratitude at the Progress of Tullamore—Dr. O'Brien's Testimony—Nova Scotia—Apt Illustration—An Indiscretion—Caution in seeking extraordinary Favors.—Letter—Mother McAuley's last Visit to St. Joseph's—Letter relative to an Invalid—Extreme Urbanity and Courtesy of the Foundress—St. Jane Frances—Mother McAuley's Anxiety that her Children's Manners should be perfectly religious and lady-like—A sweet and spotless Soul—The Graves of a Household—Letter.

MOTHER MARIANNE, the first companion of the holy foundress, was exceedingly meek and timid in disposition. It required a command to induce her to assume the charge of others, and she always relinquished that troublesome duty at the earliest opportunity. Cautious even to scrupulosity, her habitual fear of making a mistake in any part of her administration sometimes injured her manners, which were naturally very kind and gracious. The meekness of her disposition appeared in her countenance, and she was very much beloved despite the constraint that showed itself from time to time in her deportment. The good mother occasionally seemed destitute of the power to reproduce the mental stores which she certainly possessed, and was rather a patient, sympathetic listener than a brilliant talker. The zeal with which she was endowed led her rather to perfect the flock entrusted to her than to aid in spreading the rising Institute. She never had a Sister to lend or give, no matter how great the straits of Baggot Street, which the foundress now began to call "the poor old mother-house." Even Birr, in the same county, had

to be supplied from Dublin. Mother McAuley was occasionally a little vexed at this. Bishops and priests were importuning her on all sides, and she thought the younger houses might aid her, if possible, in acceding to their wishes. Half serious, half jesting, she wrote to Carlow, December, 1840 :

“ This convent [Birr] ought to be founded from Tullamore. It is a shame to be such creep-mouses in so good a cause. When we pass through Tullamore on our way to Birr I will give a bitter scolding and—*three cheers for Carlow!*”

It will be seen in the course of these pages that Carlow had sent out several foundations before its elder sister, Tullamore, would venture one.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the “bitter scolding” was never delivered. When reverend mother visited Tullamore *en route* for Birr, in December, 1840, she was so delighted with its progress, and so edified by the zealous and holy lives of her children, that her words were but the outcome of a heart filled with gratitude to God, whose blessing was so evidently upon the seed she had sown in so good a soil.

But although, for reasons probably beyond their control, the Tullamore Sisters were unable to make the Birr foundation, still that they were by no means deficient in missionary zeal we have the eloquent testimony of Mgr. O’Brien, the present eminent dean of Limerick.

“ Dr. O’Brien,” he writes, speaking of himself in the third person, “ had a considerable delay between the period of his engagement by Archbishop Murray and that of his departure for Halifax. It was natural that the possibility of introducing the Order [of Mercy] into this province [Nova Scotia] should become the object of his thoughts. He had been engaged to deliver a few lectures to the nuns of Tullamore. . . . The community comprehended many accomplished young ladies, who had recently abandoned their

happy homes ; yet at the bare mention of the wants of a new country every individual of the community offered to abandon friends and country to encounter poverty and privation in Nova Scotia.

“Some time after the same clergyman’s surprise at the self-devotion of the children was not a little increased by the heroism of the parent. He preached in Dublin to a numerous community, including the venerable and lamented foundress. He expressed a hope that a branch of the Order of Mercy might be introduced into Halifax by its respected prelate. After a few days, when Catherine McAuley, unknown to the world, had contemplated the sacrifice she was about to make—a sacrifice much exaggerated by false notions of our climate and state of society—she declared her intention of devoting herself, if permitted, for the rest of her days to Nova Scotia. To every representation of the loss that would accrue to her native country she calmly replied : ‘The Institute does not require me at home. It has young, intelligent, and devoted children ; and I may be fit for the rough work to be encountered in a new region.’ When spoken to regarding the funds necessary for such an object she smiled and said : ‘For ourselves we need none. We should teach a day-school in addition to the poor-school ; and you know not, sir, upon how little a nun can live.’ ”

And as we desire to make this work, with our *Life of Catherine McAuley*,\* so far as we can accomplish it, encyclopædic of the subject, it will not be out of place here to give a few more extracts from the same eloquent pen :

“Few could be found so transcendently fascinating in person and manner as the venerated foundress. The bright intelligence of her all-accomplished mind addressed you in every glance of her calm but penetrating eye ; and

\* There are a few inaccuracies—to be corrected in the next edition—in the *Life of Catherine McAuley* (New York, 1866), but they are merely incidental and do not affect the personal history of the holy foundress, so far as we have been able to learn.

as it diffused itself over her features, cast in the finest mould of benevolence, but on which passion had never left trace or shadow, you could scarcely imagine any one physically or intellectually superior to the foundress of the Order of Mercy. . . . For some years she had become the centre of attraction to the high and titled of the three kingdoms. Her time was much occupied in bestowing those attentions which the distinguished of every country demanded from her high position and exalted character. No variety of intercourse could exhaust the versatility of her conversational powers, no difference of character could baffle her penetration. Whether her visitor were a votary of this world or the next, he quitted her presence in astonishment at her powers and in admiration of her virtues."

The above is taken from the *Halifax Register*. In the Introduction, from the same pen, to the *Life of Catherine McAuley* there is a still more striking passage :

" If ever there was a time when the originator of a great institute is particularly attached to the work, it is when first obstacles have been removed and diffusive life shows the wide range the system is about to enjoy. There before the eyes is the success—and just in its vigor, too—when hope can picture nothing too great to be achieved, and experience inspires a confidence not before, perhaps, particularly reliant. Afterwards, when the work looks finished, and the machinery is moved by other hands, and other minds have made their own of its success, interest and effort may rule in imperfect souls, but everything natural and supernatural binds one to the old arena at such a period as that to which we refer. It was just at such a time the writer encountered Mother McAuley, and just at such a time she was willing to join him in a mission of charity to Nova Scotia.

" Reverend mother was a person never to be forgotten. Her face, look, bearing, and conversation are just as fresh to-day, after so many years, as they were the evening of the

day alluded to in the obituary ; the full, steady blue eyes, so full of light and yet not dazzling :

“ ‘ Her spirit sits aloof and high,  
But glances from her tender eye,  
In sweetness droopingly ’ ;

the fresh autumnal bloom of the cheek, pure and transparent from the paradise of heavenly thoughts in which she lived ; the smile, so recollected yet so genial, that at once won heart and confidence ; and the bearing and conversation, in which an easy dignity and wonderful facility of expression combined to make her conversation something which her auditor had not known before and has not since encountered.”

The grace, the play of fancy, the bright commonplace yet most apposite illustrations which enlivened her conversation could not fail to have struck so keen an observer and so accomplished a judge of the beautiful as Dr. O’Brien.

“ When I was young I often heard ‘ Go to Nova Scotia ’ said to some one who was incredulous or importunate. Perhaps I may be fortunate enough to ‘ go to Nova Scotia.’ ”

And when Dr. O’Brien demurred and spoke of the difficulty, or perhaps impossibility, of getting subjects in a new country, since vocations are only to be expected in an advanced state of religion and education, “ It would be difficult to picture her smile of incredulity as she replied :

“ ‘ Ah ! father, you mistake. You have often seen a recruiting party come into a town or city. No one appeared anxious to become a soldier. The men who enlisted were not seen ; or, if seen, no one, not even themselves, dreamed of their putting on the red coat. But the drum and fife and cockade aroused new thoughts, new hopes, and new projects, and the recruiting party is soon followed by a new supply for the ranks.’ ”

The illustration or metaphor here is perfect. Any reader of this who ever saw a recruiting party come into a town in Ireland will recognize its aptness. It is also a vivid picture of Mother McAuley's own success. Her presence in a new place "aroused new thoughts, new hopes, new projects," and never did she depart without "a new supply for the ranks," often from among ladies who never before "had dreamed of putting on the" religious dress.

These extracts, though seemingly, perhaps, irrelevant, can scarcely be considered entirely inappropriate in a history of the Tullamore foundation, since it was a casual acquaintance with the community of Tullamore that inspired Dr. O'Brien to seek an introduction to the mother of the children whose virtues he had found so edifying. We shall give just one more of his beautiful pictures of the holy foundress, "whom," he says, "we may hope at some time to see placed upon our altars":

"The events of her life are like the lapiduli of a grand mosaic: each of them is a small thing, but the combination of them makes such a picture as rivals the glory of the pencil and makes the cold stone breathe like the canvas of Raphael."

But we must return to the more direct affairs of St. Joseph's. Cautious and prudent as Mother Marianne was, she once committed an indiscretion which caused her no slight mortification. Desirous of giving to a ceremony unusual *éclat*, she, with the concurrence of Dr. O'Rafferty, invited the Apostle of Temperance to preach; but several of the principal people in King's County being distillers, the bishop was afraid to excite them, and he desired Mother Marianne to *decline* Father Mathew's proffered services. Of course "the Apostle," who was well used to have his peculiar "services" declined, was not in the least offended. But his poor friend was terribly mortified at having so difficult an act of obedience to perform. She wrote an account of the affair to reverend mother, to whom

she always looked for consolation and—reprehension, and she received the former, which was needed far more than the latter. “It will be a lesson to all our convents,” wrote the humble foundress, “to be extremely cautious in seeking extraordinary favors. It was a little too presuming, and a great penance has followed. The kind, complying answer by return of post might have excited some secret motions of self-complacency, but God in His mercy sent the remedy.”

Reverend mother paid her last visit to St. Joseph’s in May, 1841, when returning from Birr, just six months before her happy death. She was accompanied by her dearly beloved daughter, Mother M. Cecilia Marmion, then mistress of novices in the parent house. The community perceived with grief that her health was breaking down, and that it could not long resist the labors and fatigues of her numerous foundations. On that happy though melancholy occasion her sweetness endeared her more than ever, if possible, to her children. Greatly gratified at the continued advancement of the community, which now numbered fourteen, she frequently dilated on the extraordinary goodness of God to them all, and thanked Him in a special manner for the holy and benevolent guardian He had given them in Dr. O’Rafferty, to whose guidance she lovingly committed them with full confidence.

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1841, reverend mother addressed the following characteristic letter to her old beloved companion :

“MY DEAR SISTER MARIANNE: I am now going to give you a little trouble, or rather to beg you to accept it. A dear, much-valued Sister is in a most delicate state, and we think she may receive benefit from change of air, which has been prescribed for her. Rev. Mr. O’Hanlon, our dear, good father, would go with her on Monday next, if you could admit her. I need not recommend her to your tenderness, as I know she will experience every mark of affec-

tion, though a stranger [to you]. All expenses, of course, will be defrayed.

“Write me a line immediately, that we may have her ready. She is one of the last professed, Sister M. Justina.

“I received your letter in Birmingham, and will reply to it soon. I am going to propose myself as deputy to Father O’Rafferty in the guardianship of your convent. Your good bishop was much mistaken as to property here. We have ever confided largely in divine Providence, and shall continue to do so. God bless you !

“Your ever affectionate

“M. C. McAULEY.”

Verily, the higher the authority in the Church the more gently it is administered ; and whose finger rests more lightly upon us than that of the Sovereign Pontiff himself, the great superior of us all ?

Surely no other human being could command her subjects by so many titles as the holy foundress. Well did she know that in no house of her Institute would her requests or commands be regarded otherwise than as favors. Yet how cautious, how little presuming on the authority inherent in her very office of foundress ! She will not even send an ailing member to a convent established by herself, and in which her first companion presides, without writing to ask hospitality, and waiting, despite the urgency of the case, for a reply. Nor is she willing to inconvenience the prospective hostess in any way. For, remembering the poverty of the house in its early days, she takes care to explain that she will not allow it to be at the expense of the little delicacies the precious invalid may require. Yet she knew well—none could know better—that every convent of Our Lady of Mercy, and every inmate of every convent, were so utterly at her disposal that they would vie with one another in endeavoring to please or gratify her or any one who came in her name. This exquisite courtesy accounts for the perfect charity which flowed out from the head upon the members, even to the

least and last, "like the precious ointment on the head of Aaron, which ran down the skirt of his garments, as the dew of Hermon." In this thought she was wont to call the charity which, she said upon her deathbed, had never been violated among her children, "an outpouring of the spirit of mercy." She always inculcated politeness as a most potent guardian of charity, and taught the Sisters that as love begets love, politeness begets politeness. Saints and saintly persons have ever been distinguished for this beautiful urbanity. But this instance exceeds in courtesy a charming anecdote of the illustrious foundress of the Visitation Order :

A month after the foundation (Paray, 1626) Mother de Chantal visited Paray, accompanied by her daughter, Madame de Toulonleon, who had leave to enter the monastery with her. But when the door was opened the holy mother paused on the threshold and said to her daughter: "Frances, wait here until I learn if the mother of this house is satisfied that you should enter her convent"; and to the mother: "My dear Sister, my daughter has the bishop's leave to enter your enclosure, but I do not wish her to do so without your consent." No wonder that every one admired the humility of Madame de Chantal, who used so little authority in the houses of her order.

Mother McAuley was the essence of courtesy in these points as in all others. While the rules requiring certain practices were rigidly enforced, and correction given at the times appointed, and "lovingly and sweetly," as the Rule appoints, yet during recreation and social intercourse she always treated the Sisters as ladies of rank, her equals if not her superiors, and practised in their regard, but naturally and simply, the usages of good society, which she required to be thoroughly taught in the novitiate; so that if among the novices any one chanced to be rustic or underbred, that defect might be speedily corrected. There never was a mistress of ceremonies or a "mother of the maids"

in a palace who laid more stress upon good manners or inculcated more strenuously the necessity of practising them at home and abroad. She fully agreed with her distinguished countryman, Edmund Burke, that "manners are of more importance than laws." "A perfect *religieuse*," she would say, "should be a perfect gentlewoman. Persons consecrated to God in an Order which labors for the salvation of souls ought to be the most attractive people in the world, that, their influence being boundless in their respective offices, they may be so many magnets to attract to Jesus Christ all with whom they converse."

In the varied intercourse which the holy mother maintained with her children her manners were a perfect exemplification of what she required of them. She rarely visited one of her own houses unannounced. She would tell exactly the number of her party, the probable length of their stay, the hour they ought to arrive; and if this happened to be in the night she would entreat that all except the portress should retire at the usual time, that none on her account might lose their much-needed rest.

Those who have been disturbed at all hours of the day and night by persons whom they never saw or heard of—who, in these times of telegraph and rapid postage, decline even to announce their intention of honoring with their visits the points at which they choose to stop—will appreciate the delicacy of Mother McAuley's proceedings, which she certainly meant to serve as a rule to her children in asking or accepting the hospitality of their own or other Sisters.

The sweet young creature for whom reverend mother—herself sick and suffering after her Birmingham foundation—so courteously bespoke the kind offices of the Tullamore community survived herself about a month, dying December 10, 1841. Change of air benefited her but little. Mother McAuley writes of her October 4: "The poor Sister whose case we consider hopeless as to this poor life is now

ten days in Tullamore. She revived very much, but no lasting strength has returned. Blessed is that sweet and spotless soul getting rapidly out of this miserable world. We have our own cemetery at length prepared, but I am sure she will get the first place in the nice vault at Tullamore, as cheerful [looking] as any part of the convent. May God support and comfort her to the end!"

That she was a "sweet and spotless soul" is the only impression Sister M. Justina Fleming left on the Tullamore Sisterhood during her illness and at her holy death. She was the first to repose in the cemetery at St. Joseph's, as reverend mother predicted. And reverend mother herself was the first to rest in the cemetery at Baggot Street, which she prepared towards the close of her life, and in which she was "laid in the earth like the poor," in a spot ever since regarded as holy ground, where her children love to kneel in prayer.

In over forty years there have been seventeen graves added to sweet Sister M. Justina's. In one of these lie the remains of Mother M. Baptist Geraghty, Superiorress of the Convent of Mercy, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who came to St. Joseph's early in 1863 in quest of health lost in the service of God, but which it did not please Him to restore.

When it was known that Mother McAuley desired to send Sister M. Justina away for change of air, the distant convents were eager to have the dear invalid, hoping, no doubt, that she would be an occasion for a visit from their beloved foundress. Although the death-sickness was on herself, she gratefully acknowledged each invitation by a few courteous lines. We give one of these gracious epistles :

"How shall I express the affectionate gratitude I feel for your kindness to my poor novice, Sister M. Justina, who is indeed a good religious and valuable in every way? I believe sending her to the world would be followed by her death. Dr. Corrigan is attending her at her father's

request. Dr. Stokes, who is now considered the best opinion in lung cases, desires she should drive out every fine day. He says she is better, but fears consumption is lingering about her." The above, which was written before Sister M. Justina's profession, shows that, like St. Alphonsus, reverend mother could scarcely find it in her heart to send away a fervent novice who besought God to give her the great grace of dying in religion.

## CHAPTER XII.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

Workhouse Hospital—Courteous Relations of Protestant Guardians with the Sisters—Mother Doyle resigns the Office of Superior—She is compelled to resume the Burden—Kells—Birthplace of Dr. Thomas Betagh—The Dempsey Bequest—Dean Cogan's History—The *Book of Kells*—The Kells Convent—The Navan Convent—Father Eugene—Leighsbrook House—Londonderry—Death of Mother Doyle—Drogheda—London—Clara—Rochford Bridge—Mother M. Paul Fielding—Trim—Sir William Wilde's Description—Mullingar—Conclusion.

IN the year 1864 the Tullamore nuns added a new branch to their duties by assuming charge of the workhouse, hospitals, and infirmaries. A pretty little convent was built for their use by the Poor-Law Guardians. This work, which was the spontaneous offer of these gentlemen, was considered at Tullamore and elsewhere as a great venture, and it certainly was a new phase in the duties of the "moving nuns." It is gratefully recorded that the Sisters have never had the least reason to regret the risk, and that the slightest unpleasantness arising from officials, etc., has not yet taken place. On the contrary, the most marked attention and respect are paid to the Sisters, and the slightest expression of their wishes has always been regarded as law by these gentlemen, the majority of whom are Protestants.

Since 1861 almost all the workhouse hospitals in Ireland have been handed over to the Sisters of Mercy. In all cases the nuns occupy apartments attached to the workhouse, yet quite separated from it. They have daily Mass in the chapel of the workhouse, and the Blessed Sacra-

ment either there or in an apartment fitted up as a choir. The convents established in connection with workhouses are all branches from some large convent in the neighborhood.

The greatest change for the better has been perceived since the Sisters have taken charge ; and although the patients are far more comfortable, and the guardians have assumed the additional expense of fitting up suitable residences for the Sisters, a great reduction in the outlay is found to be the case.

“ The sick poor,” says our Tullamore correspondent, “ are of course comforted by the presence of the nuns, and the dreary chill which the very atmosphere of the workhouse possessed is, I think, to a great extent dispersed. It seems as though there were a homelike feeling about these places conducted by nuns which similar places elsewhere do not possess. As for our workhouse, I think it is not the same place. Even the able-bodied have become more tractable because of the Sisters’ supervision—a fact the officials very willingly acknowledge.”

Mother Marianne resigned her office of superior after about eight years’ successful administration, but she was not suffered to remain in the hidden life which she coveted. In 1844 she was sent to establish the Institute at Kells, which, like Durrow, was consecrated by the memory of St. Columba. It is also historically known as the seat of the memorable synod of the Irish clergy at which Cardinal Paparo distributed the four palls to the four archbishops, in 1152. “ It was,” says Dean Cogan,\* “ a place of great importance in the days of our freedom. . . . The Round Tower of Kells, the splendid sculptured crosses, and the house of St. Columbkille still remind us of the ages of faith, while the chivalrous generosity of the inhabitants whenever religion or country calls for their co-ope-

\* *History of the Diocese of Meath*, in which the learned dean has brought microscopic research to bear upon the holy places of that ancient principality.

ration indicates that the old Catholic spirit has by no means degenerated."

The Kells Convent of Mercy was founded from the Dempsey bequest—a large sum of money which the benevolent Miss Dempsey left for charitable and educational purposes—by a very zealous priest, Very Rev. Dr. Nicholas McEvoy, V.G., whose memory is still held in benediction by the grateful people among whom he ministered. Kells,\* which in other days was reputed one of the most important strongholds of the Pale, has declined to the rank of a small town of scarcely four thousand inhabitants, more interesting to the antiquarian and the Catholic historian than to those who value only material progress. The landed property of the Kells abbey confiscated by Henry VIII. was enormous. Every inch of the present town is holy ground, as its very name signifies.

The encouragement and attention bestowed on the ancient and beautiful art of illuminating on paper or parchment or vellum by the foundress and the earlier members of the Institute is also recalled by the mention of Kells, the famous *Book of Kells* being a most marvellous specimen of that art, of which an expert says: "I examined the pages of the *Book of Kells* for hours together without ever detecting a false line or an irregular interlacement. In one space of about a quarter of an inch superficial I counted with a magnifying-glass no less than one hundred and fifty-eight interlacements of a slender ribbon pattern, formed of white lines edged by black ones. . . . No wonder that tradition should allege that these unerring lines were traced by angels."

The Kells Convent of Mercy, which, of course, is dedicated to St. Columba, was opened February 9, 1844, the superiorress being Mother Marianne Doyle, who, having resigned in Tullamore, was not allowed to enjoy long the hidden

\* Kells was interesting to Mother McAuley as the birthplace (in 1738) of her early friend, instructor, and spiritual guide, the Rev. Dr. Betagh, S.J.

life which she preferred. From the beginning this house, though not exempt from trials, has been signally successful, almost all the works of the Institute being in operation in a place so hallowed by the prayers and virtues of the greatest among the Celtic monks of old. The convent, a fine, imposing structure, is built close to the ruins of St. Columba's cell. It sent a branch to Navan in 1853, and from the Navan convent a house was founded at Strabane, 1868.

The Kells schools are not under government inspection ; they were withdrawn from it several years ago, because the inspectors found fault with the children for making the sign of the cross. The Sisters here are of opinion that the schools get on better without this connection.

At Navan the Sisters conduct a large and flourishing House of Mercy for the training of servants in every sort of household work, and at Strabane they conduct a fine industrial school of over one hundred orphans ; at Moate there is a similar orphanage, equally well managed.

The Navan convent owes its existence to the pious liberality of Very Rev. Eugene O'Reilly, a holy priest who died December 12, 1852, the anniversary of the FOUNDATION OF THE ORDER OF MERCY, at the age of eighty-four years, having spent sixty years in the ministry. Father Eugene, as he was popularly called, was celebrated for his musical and poetical ability, which he consecrated wholly to the divine service. He used to spend the long winter evenings teaching the young people of his parish to sing the beautiful hymns he had composed or translated for them. His violin was said to give forth at his magical touch tones equal to the sweetest and mellowest notes of the human voice. One may easily judge how intensely beloved the gentle pastor was by a people so passionately fond of music and poetry. "The last act of his life," says the *Catholic Directory*, 1853, "was to found and endow

for ever a convent for the Sisters of Mercy, to be established on his own estate in the town of Navan—a lasting proof of his love for the poor."

In 1857 the Sisters of Mercy, Navan, removed to Leighsbrook House, their present beautiful residence, which they have carefully adapted to conventional purposes. Their Institute developed so rapidly that the buildings used as school-houses became quite inadequate to the number of pupils, and the Sisters erected for educational purposes the splendid pile which adorns the vicinity of Leighsbrook House, now known as St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy.

From Kells a branch was established at Moate, 1860. The second convent from Tullamore was Londonderry, founded by Most Rev. Dr. McLaughlin in 1848. This town, commonly called Derry, is in the territory so passionately beloved and so eloquently bemoaned by St. Columba. It is famous for its long siege, 1689, and contains about twenty thousand inhabitants, scarcely half of whom are Catholics.

When it became expedient to establish a convent—the first attempted in the extreme north since the Reformation—in this stronghold of Orangeism, Mother Marianne Doyle, who had just resigned the government of the Kells house and returned to Tullamore, was selected as the person best suited for so difficult and delicate a task. It looks like a pleasant coincidence that Mother Marianne, who was singular for meekness of disposition, seemed to follow the Dove of the Cells, and founded houses in places watered by his tears and hallowed by his footsteps. Kells and Durrow were dear to this passionate lover of Erin, but his best affections were centred on the monastery of Derry. In one of his touching poems he gives vent to the intensity of his love for "fair Derry" in that hyperbolic strain in which he prefers the site of one cell there "to all the tribute of Alba," and he avers that every leaf of the oaks of Derry, his "little oak grove," is crowded full of heaven's angels.

The experiment of founding a convent in the extreme north was successful in the hands of the dove-like Mother Marianne. Worn out by labors rather than years, this eminent religious passed happily to our Lord at her last foundation (1866)—Derry—in the fifty-seventh year of her age. As she had been professed at George's Hill Convent December 12, 1831, she used to be called the twin sister of the holy foundress. She was her first disciple, and in concert with her opened the schools at Baggot Street house, September 24, 1827, being then not quite eighteen years old. She spent thirty-nine years in the congregation, and was thirty-five years professed when summoned to meet in judgment the heavenly Spouse whom she had so tenderly loved and so faithfully served from childhood.

The third foundation from Tullamore was Drogheda, 1854. It is curious that one part of this ancient city, the south or Meath side, is in the diocese of Meath, the rest being in the diocese of Armagh. The name of Drogheda recalls the horrible deeds of September, 1649, when the savage hordes of Cromwell murdered men, women, and children indiscriminately, until the streets were actually flooded with human gore and the silvery Boyne empurpled for miles of its course. It was thought that the few inhabitants who were not slaughtered were all shipped to Barbadoes as slaves; but many must have escaped by hiding or fleeing, for it is well known that soon after the terrible visitor had deprived the “old citie by the Boyne” of his hideous presence it was almost as populous as ever.

Drogheda is the chief town of Louth, the smallest county in Ireland. It is little over twenty miles from Dublin, and therefore conveniently situated for a branch. The Sisters of Mercy, Dublin, established a house here, but relinquished it to their Sisters of Tullamore, while the Tullamore Sisters gave the Dublin Sisters a house which they had founded in Loughrea. Drogheda is in communication by steam with Liverpool and other places, and, like most sea-

ports, is considered a good location for a House of Mercy. The Sisters of Mercy have persevered in this city, so full of religious and historic memories. Very Rev. Thomas Matthews, the present incumbent of the ancient parish known as St. Mary's, has built the handsome Convent of Mercy that adjoins his district. It is remarkable that numerous relatives of the late Cardinal Cullen, who belonged to a most Levitical family, are mentioned in the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy as foundresses or superiors of convents in places where the difficulties in the way of establishment were unusually great. His niece, Mother M. Paula Keatly, was named superioress of the Drogheda convent.

The Convent of Mercy, East Commercial Road, London, England, 1859, is the fourth filiation from St. Joseph's, Tullamore.

On May 1, 1862, the Convent of Mercy, Clara, was founded, the fifth convent from Tullamore. A fine house and very beautiful grounds were bequeathed to the Sisters of Mercy for conventional purposes by Rev. Patrick Barry. Six years later a magnificent convent was built, which has the singular honor of enclosing within its walls *the very stones of a house once occupied as a nunnery by St. Brigid.* The convent is, of course, dedicated to that great saint, the Mary of Erin, of whom the whole surrounding country is full of quaint, fantastic, and beautiful legends; and it is a great boon to this pretty inland town. Its schools for the poor and the rich are crowded, and its Sunday-schools and evening classes for the grown girls engaged in the flax factories and other employments which hinder their attendance at the day-schools are a very important feature in the institution.

The above Convent of Mercy is mentioned on the tomb of Rev. Patrick Barry as "a monument of his zeal and piety." Clara includes also the parish of Kilbride, or the Church of St. Brigid. The ruins of the first church built by that great saint after her religious profession give a mel-

an holy interest to this sweet, pastoral country. Many of the stones of her convent and church were carried away from Kilbride cemetery for building purposes with leave of the Protestant church-warden. These precious relics now help to form the Clara Convent of Mercy, as has been said.

The sixth foundation was at Rochford Bridge, Westmeath, 1862. The house and grounds for this convent were the gifts of a Protestant lady, who also gave ground for a church. Her charity was doubly blessed by the great graces of conversion and vocation. She became a Catholic and a Sister of Mercy—Sister Mary Paul Fielding. Subsequently this zealous lady \* went to Australia, “impelled,” says one of her religious Sisters, “to cause others to discover the precious jewel of the true faith, which she ever regretted she had discovered too late.” Among the benefactors of the Rochford Bridge convent are Richard Charles Coffey, Esq., of Newcastle House, Westmeath, and Rev. Peter Molloy, who inherits the love of the Order of Mercy from his uncle, Most Rev. Dr. Cantwell, late Bishop of Meath.

The next is the Convent of Mercy, Trim, a superb Gothic edifice, which, says the late historian of Meath, Dear Cogan, “is on the most costly and extensive scale, and surpasses anything we have in the diocese.”

Far-famed Trim, on the historic Boyne, is now a dismantled old city, full of gigantic ruins, through which the “walking nuns” reverently tread in their daily meanderings

\* The *Southern Argus*, March 7, 1877, mentions the arrival of eight nuns at Yass, New South Wales, and the enthusiastic reception publicly accorded them. Right Rev. Dr. Lanigan, Bishop of Goulbourne, accompanied them. They were welcomed by all creeds and classes, and among other pageants devised in their honor was a very pretty one in which all the girls of Yass under eighteen years of age, robed in white and bearing flowers, preceded the nuns to the church gate, took position on either side guarding a passage to the principal entrance, and as the carriage conveying the nuns passed through they strewed the ground with flowers. The procession which led Mother M. Paul Fielding and her nuns in triumph to their new home began seven miles outside of Yass. Nothing so impressive or enthusiastic was ever before witnessed in these remote regions.

among the sick and poor. The new convent revives the ancient glories of St. Mary's Abbey, founded by St. Patrick in the fifth century, "where the naked were clad, the hungry fed, and the door of hospitality was open to the stranger." It was the late Very Rev. John O'Connell, parish priest of Trim, who raised this splendid pile to the Mother of Mercy and bequeathed it to her children, that they might minister for ever to the poor, sick, and ignorant, whom he had loved so well, and in whose service he had spent himself for the love of God.

The beautiful stained-glass window over the high altar, representing the Assumption of Our Lady, in the chapel of the Trim Convent of Mercy, is a gem worthy of the palmiest days of the City of Ruins.

The present aspect of this grand but melancholy old town is eloquently described by Dr. (Sir William) Wilde in *The Boyne and the Blackwater* : "To see Trim aright the tourist must approach it from Dublin, when all the glorious ruins which crowd this historic locality, and which extend over a space of above a mile, burst suddenly upon him: the remains of St. John's Friary and the castellated buildings at the bridge of Newtown; the stately abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul, a little further on, raising aloft its tall, light, and ivy-mantled windows; the neighboring chapel with its sculptured tombs and monumental tablets; the broad green lawns through which the Boyne winds between that and Trim; the silver stream itself, gliding smoothly onward with unbroken surface; the gray, massive towers of King John's Castle, with its outward walls and barbican, the gates, the towers, the bastions, the fosse and moat, and chapel; the sheep-gate and portions of the town wall, and, towering above all, the tall, commanding form of the Yellow Steeple, which seems the guardian genius of the surrounding ruins. All these beauteous objects, with the ancient church-tower and the modern public buildings, form a combination of scenery

and an architectural diorama such as we have rarely witnessed."

It is pleasant to think that the modern Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, Trim, is not wholly out of keeping with such glorious surroundings.

The eighth filiation from Tullamore is at the more modern town of Mullingar, on the Brosna, the chief town of Westmeath, and for several years back selected as the residence of the Bishop of Meath. A large and handsome building, rivalling if not surpassing the Trim convent, has been erected by Most Rev. Thomas Nulty, Bishop of Meath, in his episcopal town. To this Miss Kerrigan, of Mullingar, contributed £1,000, and the generous bishop of this venerable see gave £1,200, left at his disposal for charitable and educational purposes, besides £475 from his private resources. The Sisters of this newly-founded house attend to the education of youth, rich and poor, the visitation and relief of the sick, and the instruction and industrial training of adults and children.

The above record eloquently testifies that Tullamore convent for the last forty years has not been "a creep-mouse in the holy cause"; and if there were over-much caution in the matter of founding houses in the beginning, the defect, if it be one, has been amply remedied. Nearly all the convents in the diocese of "Royal Meath" have been founded by the munificence of holy and zealous priests, who denied themselves the luxuries and comforts—nay, in many instances, the very necessaries—of life, in order to be able to raise up for their people, especially the poor, educational and philanthropic establishments worthy to vie with the glorious institutions of the past. These were men who loved their country next to their God, and were always in the vanguard as Catholics and as patriots—men whom Montalembert might have had in his mind when he uttered that really fine saying: "Revolutions have passed over the head of the priest without bending it"; for this is especially and gloriously true of the Irish priesthood.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### FOUNDATION AT CHARLEVILLE.

Rathgogan "planted" and called Charleville after Charles II.—Most Rev. Dr. Crotty—Miss Clancy—The Charleville Springs—Attempt to establish French Nuns in Charleville—Mrs. Mary Anne Flynn—Bishop Copinger diverts her Benevolence to Coneraile—Mother McAuley opens a Convent in Charleville—Journey thither—Escorts—Arrival—Bleak Prospects—Tempted to withdraw the Sisters—Father Croke—The Will of God—The "Moving Nuns"—Slow Progress.

IN that part of the County Cork, situated on the confines of Limerick, which belongs ecclesiastically to the diocese of Cloyne is the pleasant town of Charleville, in which Mother McAuley established the third house of her Institute in 1836.

This place, which was anciently called Rathgogan, received its present euphonious name in compliment to Charles II., as we learn from a letter of Lord Broghill to the Earl of Ormond, 1662 :

"I hope . . . to get it made a borough . . . and to have it bear the name of Charleville, it being now called by the heathenish name of *Rathgogan*. . . . I admit neither Presbyter, Papist, Independent, nor, as our proclamation says, any other sort of fanatic *to plant here*, but all good Protestants."

In Mother McAuley's time Charleville had a population of over five thousand, but, owing to emigration and other causes, it has since greatly decreased. And though these evils fell chiefly on the Catholic population, yet the census of 1861 gives the Protestant population as about one

in thirty of the whole, which explains how successful Ormond's energetic "plantation" has been.

The united sees of Cloyne and Ross were governed from the death of Bishop Collins, 1833, till his own death in 1846, by Most Rev. Bartholomew Crotty, who was one of the earliest episcopal applicants for a branch of the newly-founded Institute of Mercy. This prelate, like most of the bishops of his day, had spent much of his early life on the Continent, and previous to his elevation to the episcopacy had been successively rector of the Irish College at Lisbon and president of the Royal College of Maynooth. The holy foundress, who admired the courtliness and elegance of his manners, was highly edified by his extraordinary love and zeal for the poor, and could not easily refuse his request to give Charleville a trial. But it was chiefly with Very Rev. Father Croke, parish priest of Charleville, that the business of this foundation was transacted.

The name of Clanchy is well known among the county families of this section of Cork, and was honorably borne in the earlier part of the present century by Daniel Clanchy, Esq., of Charleville, one of the most respected Catholic magistrates in the country. But a lady of the same family was deservedly held in still higher esteem. Miss Clanchy, who was celebrated for deep piety and active philanthropy, had long desired to inaugurate in this remote district a work at once religious, educational, and charitable, which might in the course of time draw more people within its quaint streets and flowery suburbs than the tonic waters of its spas and chalybeates, so much resorted to for health and pleasure. A considerable property-owner, this lady gave the best house in her possession, suitably furnished, for the future convent, with five hundred pounds as the beginning of a foundation fund. As she was accustomed to go to Dublin occasionally, she became acquainted with the holy foundress, whom she visited at St. Mary's, and so pleased was she on seeing how the works of mercy

were carried on in that new and fervent house that she earnestly begged a few of the devoted nuns for poor Charleville. The zealous pastor was equally urgent, and the venerable bishop would not be denied.

An unsuccessful attempt had previously been made to establish a community of French nuns—probably *émigrées*—in this town. Later a native of Charleville, Mrs. Mary Anne Flynn, entered the South Presentation Convent, Cork, with a view to aid in introducing the Presentation nuns; but the zealous widow was easily induced to choose a more promising field for her labors, and her legacy was diverted to the well-built, thriving town of Doneraile. Here a convent was begun with the approbation of Bishop Copinger and under the supervision of the pastor, Very Rev. Dr. O'Brien, both ecclesiastics probably thinking that it would be what military people call “a waste of ammunition” to attempt anything of the kind in Charleville. There was undoubtedly a vague impression abroad that the place was *unlucky*, that no religious house could succeed there. And probably one of the reasons so potent in inducing reverend mother to drop her good seed in Tullamore was not without influence here: If we do not settle in this unpromising spot no other Sisterhood will.

Mother McAuley, accompanied by four Sisters, set out for Charleville on the dreary morning of October 6, 1836. The journey, now accomplished in a few hours, was then an affair of several days, and the party found the canal-packet by no means as pleasant a mode of conveyance as it had proved to the Tullamore party in the bright days of the preceding spring. Reverend mother, always united to God and lifting others towards Him, must have been a delightful travelling companion. For however much the Sisters suffered from cold and fatigue, they were wont to say that the presence of their genial guide made them oblivious of all personal discomfort. The party remained a short time at Tullamore, the foundress being anxious to examine the state

of her first foundation and see what its future prospects were likely to be, and desirous also of giving the Charleville missionaries an opportunity of renewing their friendship with their dear Sisters who had left the parent house six months previous. This visit was a source of joy and consolation to all, especially to the mother-foundress and her beloved old companion, Mother Marianne Doyle.

On reaching Tullamore, where they arrived at midnight, they found Very Rev. Father Croke, a guest of their old friend Dr. O'Rafferty, and awaiting their arrival, in readiness to escort them to their new home. Charleville seems to have been accessible only by a very circuitous route, for they did not reach it till the 29th of October, the Feast of St. Colman, patron of the diocese of Cloyne. Here, as elsewhere, they were warmly welcomed. After giving thanks to God for their safe arrival and their preservation from the many dangers that beset the path of the wayfarer—no imaginary ones in those times—they adjourned to the abode prepared for them, which was far less suitable for a convent than they had been led to expect.

Next day, October 30, Bishop Crotty arrived to welcome his new children and address them some words of consolation and encouragement, which were greatly needed. His lordship bestowed his blessing upon them with a sort of pitying affection, bade *God-speed* to the good work in tones which did not well harmonize with the words, and went his way as hopeless about the success of the new enterprise as most of the parties concerned. Ere twenty-four hours elapsed it was almost universally admitted that the obstacles in the way of making a permanent settlement at Charleville were insurmountable.

The house, though better in appearance than some others in which the foundress had cast, or was to cast, her grain of mustard-seed, was so damp that the walls and furniture were in a state of chronic perspiration, such as is seen in southern latitudes when the infrequent frost is succeeded

by the ordinary bright, sunshiny weather. On wet days the very clothing of the inmates became saturated in a few moments. This uncommon humidity was supposed to be occasioned by a streamlet hard by, not quite so medicinal in its effects as the Charleville Springs of more than local celebrity, and which, however picturesque, rendered their new home all but uninhabitable.

Even Mother McAuley, the most sanguine of mortals, was dubious, and on the whole deemed it more prudent to return to Dublin without making any foundation for the present. Her Institute was in its infancy, and she had already laid away several of her most valuable auxiliaries. Her children could do as much good in other places without such danger to their lives. Would she be justified in risking the health of her dearly-loved companions in so ill-provided an establishment? Besides, other circumstances rendered the foundation peculiarly arduous: the people, though not hostile, seemed indifferent, and, not understanding the Sisters of Mercy or their mission, showed at times a sort of apathy that contrasted painfully with their usual bright, cheery ways. Prayer and reflection brought the holy mother to the conclusion that she ought not, in conscience, leave her Sisters, and on the bishop's next visit she laid before him the result of her cogitations, which grieved rather than surprised him.

But the zealous pastor would not hear of their withdrawal, and he pleaded the cause of the poor so eloquently that the foundress began once more to waver. The opinions of Father Croke, to whom the bishop committed the management of the business, had always great weight with her. She trusted him fully, and with reason, knowing that he was always as good as his word, and sometimes better than the same. Yet his reasonings did not quite convince her. Were it possible, she would gladly remain in Charleville herself; but she did not feel quite justified in subjecting her young and inexperienced children to the difficulties

which she saw, and the still greater ones which she foresaw, in connection with the foundation—the years of trouble, privation, and uncertainty sure to precede a nearly certain failure.

Nothing was decided for some days. Meanwhile the Sisters put the poor, dreary house in conventional order as far as the slender means at their disposal would permit, and then began to apply themselves indefatigably to the works of mercy, especially instructing the ignorant and visiting the sick poor. The glorious Feast of All Saints, with its octave, passed away, but no lights from above illuminated the anxious mind of the foundress regarding the subject uppermost in her thoughts. The Thirty Days' Prayer to Our Lord was said every morning, and the Thirty Days' Prayer to Our Lady every evening, to obtain light to know the divine will and strength to do it; but she still found herself unable to come to a decision.

It is well known among her children that Mother McAuley endeavored to stay at least a month at every new house she established, during which she always said the above prayers in choir to draw down God's blessing and Our Lady's smile on the good work in hand. In a rather singular way she learned what she believed to be God's will in this case, and to this she adhered so tenaciously that no influence afterwards brought to bear on her could induce her to change her resolution.

The good people of Charleville had never before seen *nuns*, as the Sisters of Mercy are always called in Ireland, outside the precincts of their convents. They knew of such only as cloistered virgins whose feet never strayed beyond the boundaries of a sacred home, "like the nunnery in Cork." Great, therefore, was their amazement when the dark-robed Sisters of Mercy were seen gliding, like spirits of the past, through the lanes and by-paths of their town in search of misery to be relieved, sickness to be assuaged, sorrow to be consoled, and ignorance to be enlightened.

Amusing enough were the comments of the poor and lowly, whose "ignorance" is so often "bliss," in presence of which the "wisdom" of this world is "folly." The younger Sisters were wont to enliven the evening, or, as Mother McAuley termed it, the general recreation, by relating the remarks that reached their ears on their daily rambles, in language intensely vernacular.

"Johnny, avic," said a venerable matron whose comely countenance was caressed by snow-white ruffles of enormous dimensions, "get up an' go near the blessed nuns. Sure if ye only stand in their shadow, alanna, ye'll never get the sickness that's goin'—the Lord bethune us an' all harm, praises to His holy Name!"

"Whisht, Danny asthore," whispered a young mother in most conciliatory tones, "an' go an' call your granny. O gran! look at the tall wan on the outside. That's the great mother-abbess herself, that came from Dublin, sailin' all the way to Cork, glory be to God! Isn't she a beauty all out?"

"Molly, don't be standin' over there, starin' like a gawk, but run in an' wash the childer's faces," says another fair dame, "for the *movin' nuns* are comin' over here. O holy Mother! the small wan is turnin' her head; they'll be here this minute. Be good now, boys, an' I'll make a play for ye whin the blessed angels are gone."

"Don't they talk nice an' sweet now?" says a dignified old lady, in remote times styled an apple-woman, but in the new English a fruit-vender, or sidewalk merchant. Subsequently the Sisters learned that this important functionary was regarded as "knowledgeable" by the neighbors. "I seen 'em sittin' down on the settle in Kitty Fagan's garret, and they spoke to the old woman like she was a queen, now, an' they the rale quality. An' thin, agra, they wint down on their binded knees, they did, an' prayed for her an' for all of us, praise be to the Lord! this day. Arrah, Nancy, whisper me this, machree: is it thrue that wan of

'em wears specs, now, like the ould bishop from foreign parts?"

But the question was never answered, for Nancy's hopeful heir, Ned, began just then to fight with his little brother for the best place to get a view of "the black ladies." "O mammy!" he shrieked, "make Patsy come off ov the chair till I get up and see the wan wid the basket. Oh! look at the blue eyes of her, mammy, an' she smilin' like the blessed picture over the althar."

"Hisht, childer!" interjected poor "mammy" in angry response. "Run behind the chest, or I'll tell yer daddy to bate ye. Oh! thanks an' praises, here they are. Stop, Tim! Take yer curly head out of the light and be paiceable; the walkin' nuns are comin' to yer sick aunty. Be quiet now, an' I'll give ye apples an' sugar by and by. Oh! here they are; ten thousand welcomes to the darlin's! Ah! then, Davy, look out at the wan on the step; isn't she a divine creature all out?"

Thus were the Sisters welcomed and discussed with Celtic effusiveness by these witty, rapid-tongued rustics, whose observation nothing escaped. In the beginning the "walking Sisters"—or, as it was sometimes varied, "the holy women from Dublin"—rarely went out without getting material for their next recreation; and no one enjoyed the strange appellations and homely commentaries gratuitously bestowed upon them more than the bright and genial foundress herself.

It will be remembered that she was distinguished for personal beauty and grace; and we have it on her own authority that almost all her early children had the same gifts to consecrate to the service of Heaven. In 1839 she wrote to Carlow of a lovely girl who had just entered: "Our last, a sweet young creature, reminds me of *our first flock*."

Now, it happened that one day, as two of "the moving nuns" were plodding through the mud in a back lane, a couple of women, venerable for years if for nothing else,

began in their soft, sweet brogue to invoke all manner of blessings on the fair faces, which showed all the fairer through their half-transparent veils ; they hushed their voices as the “divine creatures” passed by, and began some striking pantomime not easily interpreted by persons unused to the effusiveness of the genuine southern Celt. But one of these ancient ladies, unable to conceal her admiration of “the walkin’ ange’s,” cried out with a burst of uncontrollable enthusiasm :

“ Oh ! then it was the Almighty God Himself—glory be to His holy Name !—that dhrove ye in among us.”

These simple, hearty words were as a flood of light to reverend mother’s soul, and touched her to the quick ; she instantly resolved that, since the good God Himself had indeed “driven them in” among the poor of Charleville, they would even abide there. And nothing could ever move her from that position, though, despite the zeal and most strenuous efforts of all concerned, the new establishment made little or no progress, and was so severely tried with the cross in many ways that, in connection with Charleville, hope turned to despair in every heart but her own.

Miss Clanchy was the chief instrument employed by God to found this convent, and her encouraging kindness fostered its growth. But even this valued benefactress became a source of disappointment. It was expected that she would enter the novitiate and devote her fine qualities and her large fortune to the aggrandizement and consolidation of the shaky house she had been the means of founding. But family circumstances, the chief of which was her rather unlooked-for reception of the seventh sacrament, released her from promises which we must suppose were conditional, and rendered her unable to endow the convent so as to make it even comparatively independent.

The mother-foundress remained at Charleville for a month, working with her usual earnestness at every duty of the Institute, arranging business within and without,

consoling the dear Sisters, from whom she was so soon to part, and endeavoring to make the house so comfortable that they could live in it without risk to their health, so valuable to the originators of a new institution.

The convent of Charleville, like that of Tullamore, she dedicated to St. Joseph, to whom she always recommended the Sisters to be specially devoted. And the holy patriarch blessed it with spiritual and even temporal blessings—but that was after many days.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### MORE GLOOM THAN SUNSHINE.

The House with the Charm—Its gloomy Prospects—Journey to Limerick—In the Snow—The Coach to Dublin—The “Head Inn”—Mass and Holy Communion—The Bishop of Cork—Mother M. Angela Dunne—Letters—Hope deferred—Very Rev. Father Croke—“Arise and walk in the Land through the length and breadth thereof: for I will give it to thee”—Incidents.

CHARLEVILLE, being the third house inaugurated by reverend mother—for Kingstown was, and is, a branch of the Dublin house—used to be playfully styled “the convent with the charm”; but wherein its peculiar charm consisted was not very clear in its slow and labored commencement, which but too well verified the saying, Every beginning is weak.

Gloomy indeed were its prospects on the bleak morning of November 29, 1836, when the holy foundress had to tear herself away from her beloved children at three o'clock, several hours before dawn, and with her weeping companion take the rickety stage for Limerick. The pilgrims set out fasting, partly because their hearts were too full, but chiefly because they hoped to reach the fair city by the Shannon in time for Mass and Holy Communion. Dreary was their drive through the beautiful plain from poor Charleville, where they had left their dear ones full of anxious fears, to Limerick, about twenty miles due north, which was literally a fair city in their eyes, for they reached it amid a blinding snow-storm.

The stage drew up before the “head inn,” but two of its

benumbed passengers declined the hospitality that imposing mansion afforded and set off in search of a chapel. It was with difficulty they found one ; but difficulties were trifles to them compared with the coveted happiness of hearing Mass and receiving Holy Communion. How much of the marvellous success which ultimately blessed the Charleville convent may be due to that Mass and that Communion, heard and received despite so many obstacles ! And did not "virtue go out" from the holy foundress in that absorbing prayer and bless the city of Limerick, too, in which—perhaps for her sake—God was to give such glorious success to her children a few years later ?

Fervent indeed must have been their orisons, for noon passed by ere they rose from their devotions. The snow was still falling profusely ; and as it veiled in robes of white the ordinary landmarks, they lost their way several times before reaching the "head inn." It was past one when they breakfasted. Few of the accommodations which make travel so easy to-day were within reach in a third or fourth rate provincial town forty-five years ago, and even these few were not enjoyed by the saintly foundress and her young companion. The hospitality of the good Presentation nuns who had settled in Sexton Street some months previous would have been gladly offered, no doubt ; but, either because a stay with them might involve unnecessary delay, or because the mother-foundress had not written to ascertain whether they could conveniently accommodate her, she declined to call on them. For in matters of this kind she was courteous even to formality, and, as has been already intimated, did not like to visit even her own convents unannounced, still less those of other orders, however friendly.

They had now to make inquiries as to the most expeditious means of reaching Dublin, where Mother McAuley had an appointment fixed for the next day with Most Rev. John Murphy, Bishop of Cork. Limerick is about

one hundred miles from the metropolis, and she well remembered the time when a heavy, lumbering vehicle, humorously called "The Fly," performed the journey in four days, and the welcome with which its lighter successor, "The Balloon," was hailed when it undertook to cover the distance in three days, going over Thomond Bridge and through the ancient monastic city of Killaloe, and saving twenty-four hours by having relays of horses ready harnessed at the principal stopping-places on the "Dublin Road." Rash indeed would that man be deemed who should suppose that the march of intellect could, in point of speed, go beyond the stout "Balloon," with its imposing "guard" in red trappings, who directed its cumbersome movements with a skill that put travellers at their ease, and a majesty that awed the urchins who loved to besiege the mail-coach and criticise the passengers, as it drew up before the scarcely less imposing "coach-office" of a country town. But though the goal had not been yet attained and the iron horse was a thing of the future, our travellers were able to realize their hopes of "making" the capital by next morning. Early in the afternoon they ascended the strongly-built coach and were stowed among "the six insides"; and while they were reciting the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, with which they always began their journeys, the "mail" rumbled out through Clare Street and onward to Nenagh, and, after a dismal drive which lasted all night, they reached St. Mary's, chilled through and through, a little after nine next morning, just in time to hear the Mass about to be celebrated in their beautiful chapel by the lord bishop of Cork, who had come to Dublin to make arrangements for establishing a convent of Our Lady of Mercy in his episcopal city.

Poor Charleville was what the foundress emphatically called "a sickly branch." It seemed as though it must fail. Months swelled to years, and still no improvement was visible. So many and so serious were the difficulties of a

house to-day so flourishing that the mother-superior, Mary Angela Dunne, reputed among her companions a model of meek endurance and silent suffering, made many and strenuous efforts to induce reverend mother to dissolve it and recall her poor, dispirited children to St. Mary's. But having, as it were, given her word to the Lord *that they would abide where He had driven them*, she would not hear of their abandoning this forlorn hope. She felt that Charleville *was* to go on, that such was the divine will; and in reply to the persistent representations of Mother Angela she wrote, December, 1837, a letter which she desired should be regarded as decisive. Here are some extracts:

"What could excuse us before God for casting off any charge which we had freely undertaken, except [we were] compelled by necessity to do so? . . . Are not the poor of Charleville as dear to Him as [those] elsewhere? And while one pound of Miss Clancy's five hundred lasts ought we not to persevere and confide in His providence?

"Put your whole confidence in God. He will never see you want necessaries for yourself or your children. It would afflict me much, and it would be a disgrace to our Order, to have a break-up."

The confidence in God which reverend mother so strongly recommended to her doubting and faint-hearted disciple bore its accustomed fruit. In a letter to the same, two years later, we read a happier augury:

"I expect we shall have a useful and flourishing institution in Charleville. I often lay out plans for it, and, please God, they will succeed. It has hitherto been a sick branch, but it will be a strong one yet."

Commenting on this prophecy, verified beyond all expectation, the worthy successor of Mother Angela writes:

"To many a young mother struggling with the difficulties of a new foundation will these words be consoling and encouraging."

Mother Angela was not wholly without experience when selected to assume the reins of government in Charleville. She had previously presided over the Kingstown convent, founded in 1834—a position which required no ordinary amount of courage and patience. But her dislike of the onerous and dangerous task of governing others amounted to repugnance. It was her ambition to spend her life beside her beloved mother and guide, always within hearing of her suave, wise counsels, and near enough to ask her blessing on every particular duty. She was exceedingly diffident, and so painfully fearful of having in any way to account for the souls of others that nothing short of a positive command could overcome a reluctance naturally invincible. For a while she comforted herself with the hope that the ever-kind mother foundress would soon call her home as a worthless and unprofitable servant, utterly unfit to be charged with the direction of others.

This she perseveringly implored her to do, until at last reverend mother spoke her mind with a determination that strongly contrasted with her habitual meekness in directing her children. From that moment Mother Angela seemed to have no further misgiving. At least she meekly submitted.

There was a good deal of congeniality between the mother and the daughter. Mother Angela, born in 1788, was nearly double the age of any other of the first seven, and, therefore, fit to be regarded as a companion, while the others were but children. One disliked the burden of office as much as the other, and hence the former had for the latter that fellow-feeling which is said to make people wondrous kind. The superiority was a point upon which, probably, the foundress was a little sore at this period. When the six years of her first term of office had expired, in 1838, she was still, by the letter of the Rule, eligible to be elected and re-elected, though, as a matter of fact, no election was held in the Institute during her life, as the con-

firmation of the Rules and Constitutions occurred only in 1841, the year of her happy departure to the home for which her heart yearned. But she earnestly besought the archbishop to allow her to resign into other hands the government of the Institute, and, in reply to her pressing entreaties, his grace almost crushed her by informing her that as foundress he had authority to confirm her in the office of mother-superior for life, which, to the great delight of the Sisters, he actually did.

No wonder, then, that she was unusually direct with her friend, whose case was a less evil, since it included the hope of release, though a hope not destined to be realized.

Mother McAuley's disposition, ever bright and cheerful, led her to make the best of what she called her "lot." Mother Angela's temptation was to look out for the worst, even when the arrival of the best was not altogether unlikely. But at the voice of obedience she submitted like a docile child, and under the guidance of the foundress, who possessed in a very high degree—perhaps in the highest—all the rare qualities requisite for governing others, to her own gain and theirs, Mother Angela became a model superior.

Very Rev. Father Croke entirely coincided with the mother-foundress in her design of keeping up the Charleville convent. The better acquainted he became with Mother Angela and her Sisters the more appreciative and tenacious he was of their services. About the middle of 1838 he came to Dublin to give an account of his stewardship. Mother McAuley, whom he ever held in the highest esteem, was delighted to see him, and hastened to give some details of the visit to her friend, Very Rev. Dr. Fitzgerald, President of Carlow College, in a letter dated July 3, 1838: "Father Croke, of Charleville, has just been here. He comforted me greatly by the account he gave of the Sisters. He said, even if he were obliged to go England to beg funds for the erection of a convent, they should be at no loss by

Miss Clancy's marriage. This was strong language from rather a cold character."

In August of the same year she writes to the mother-superior of the Carlow convent : " The account given of all our dear Sisters who have gone forth is so satisfactory that our invitations are endless. Father O'Hanlon has just returned from visiting Cork, Charleville, and Tullamore. He was never such an advocate for founding houses as he is now. I do not tell him of half the invitations we receive, lest he should be pressing what cannot be done."

The wisdom of the foundress and her almost preternatural foresight appear in the fact that, despite the extraordinary difficulties that menaced the very existence of this foundation, she would never withdraw the Sisters, confident that, under the guardianship of so prudent and charitable a priest and so saintly a superior, it must, with the divine blessing, ultimately prosper. It was, then, with delight and a holy exultation that, with the Sisters destined for the Limerick foundation, she assisted, on her favorite Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 1838, at the ceremony of laying the corner-stone of a new convent in Charleville, the site of which was presented to the community by the Earl of Cork.

And doubtless she was glad to find this nobleman liberal enough to dower a religious house with a site from the valuable monastic spoils which he inherited. For his lordship was heir to that Earl of Cork who received the lands of the North Abbey of Cork, and even the country retreat of the monks near Ardfert, Kerry, through one Andrew Skiddy, from that benevolent and upright royal lady known in history as Queen Elizabeth.

Since that blessed Feast of Our Lady of Mercy the "useful and flourishing institution" which the foundress foresaw in Charleville has not ceased to exist. The dampness, which it was feared would prove so deleterious to the Sisters, did not injure them in the old house or follow them

to the new. Their necrology numbers only seven professed Sisters and one novice for nearly half a century.

Reverend mother paid several visits to Charleville, which it was easy for her to do, as foundation business often brought her in that direction. She rested several days there in the latter half of August, 1839, when she was accompanied by Mother Angela's dear friend and former companion, Mother Clare Moore also Sister Mary Clare Agnew ["Geraldine"] and Sister Mary Augustine Taylor, who had just been professed and were to set out a little later to establish the first house of the Institute in England. And it may be observed here that the journeys of the holy foundress were fruitful in many ways. Wherever her feet rested benedictions were multiplied. The ancient blessing, "Increase and multiply, and fill the land," seemed to fall beneath her shadow. From courtly Dublin to picturesque Galway; through the plains of Kildare and the classic fields of King's County; by the broad, shining bosom of the lordly Shannon and among the golden vales and purple hills of gallant Tipperary; from Newry to Tralee, and from the historic windings of the Boyne to the poetic banks of the southern Blackwater, education and benevolent institutions, peopled by her children, have sprung up in myriads, and now sanctify the regions which her presence and her prayers so often blessed; built and consolidated with a rapidity which suggests the wand of the magician or the gourd of the prophet rather than the labored growth of time—as if to her had been repeated from above the promise that cheered the patriarch of old in the weary days of his pilgrimage:

"Lift up thine eyes, and look from the place wherein thou now art to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west. . . . Arise and walk through the land in the length and in the breadth thereof: for I will give it unto thee."

## CHAPTER XV.

### CONTINUATION OF THE CHARLEVILLE FOUNDATION.

Works of the Charleville Sisterhood—Pension-Schools—Dr. Haley, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, obtains leave for the Presentation Nuns to teach the Rich—Other Convents—Boarding-Schools—Increased Progress of “the Moving Nuns” in Charleville—Sanction obtained from Rome for Boarding-Schools by Right Rev. Michael O’Connor, first Bishop of Pittsburgh, U. S. ; by Right Rev. Dr. Quinn, Bishop of Bathurst, Australia—Edifying Life and Death of Mother Angela—Letter—Very Rev. Father Croke.

POOR-SCHOOLS, pension or benefit schools, and industrial schools are among the chief duties of the Charleville community. While *crochet* lace continued in fashion the Sisters were able to give employment to many girls and young matrons, often paying out in wages to these humble caterers to style over a thousand pounds a year. Limerick lace, Irish point, and other fine works have been taught with varying success. And sewing of every description was always among the “branches” of education insisted on by the holy foundress, who desired that the pupils, like the Sisters, should be fortified with every possible resource against idleness, and “be always engaged in some useful employment.” \*

\* Mother McAuley doubtless appreciated sewing for more reasons than one. “I wish I could sew,” says her well-known contemporary, Sydney Smith; “I believe one reason why women are so much more cheerful generally than men is because they can work and vary more their employments. Lady — used to teach her sons carpet-work. All men ought to learn to sew.” “Men,” says Miss Strickland, in calamities, “give themselves up to morbid melancholy, brooding incessantly over their troubles; women,” in similar circumstances, “divert their thoughts from dwelling exclusively on subjects of a painful nature by employing their fingers in the sedative occupation of needlework.”

The establishment of a pension-school was absolutely necessary in Charleville, where, as in most other places, there were parents who desired to pay for the schooling of their children, and would on no account send them to what they called a "charity-school." And Mother McAuley would not deprive this large and deserving class of the excellent instruction which she had trained her Sisters to impart. Although it has, in some instances, been assumed that schools for the upper and middle classes were not included within the scope of Mother McAuley's Institute, or at least were not established by her, yet facts will not bear out this assumption. Even so well-informed a writer as the author of *The First Sister of Mercy*\* says: "Pension-schools for middle-class girls have sprung up in some convents *since* the time of Mother McAuley, the great need of the class of children whom they benefit making such work almost imperative on the Sisters."

The truth is that Mother McAuley opened pension-schools in almost every convent she established. She opened one, as we have seen, in Tullamore; and she presided at the opening of the Charleville pension-school, and received the first pupil who presented herself—"thus giving," writes the present mother-superior of Charleville convent, "her practical sanction to the establishment of these schools." She even took a special interest in them as nurseries in which girls destined to be among the best members of her Order might receive an education that must render them peculiarly useful. This foresight, which might almost be dignified by the name of prophecy, has been abundantly justified by the experience of nearly half a century. And it is very remarkable that, though the *House of Mercy for the Protection of Distressed Women of Good Character* be the special feature of her congregation, she founded more pension-schools than Houses of Mercy during her too short religious career, 1827-1841.

Similar has been the practice of the elder Order from which several of the regulations of the Sisters of Mercy have been derived. In many places the Presentation nuns have added pay-schools to their more special duties. Bishop Haly, a devoted friend of the Sisters of Mercy, received from His Holiness Gregory XVI. a rescript which permits the Presentation nuns of Bagnalstown, in his diocese, to open such schools. At that very time, 1838, the Sisters of Mercy in Carlow were imparting a superior education to young ladies. But as the foundress herself had established the good work—which is not the case as regards the venerated Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters—the bishop naturally deemed it superfluous to ask such a rescript for the Sisters of Mercy, who taught a superior school for the upper and middle classes of Carlow beneath the shadow of his cathedral.

The Presentation nuns conduct pension-schools at Clane, Castleisland, Mountmellick, Lucan, Granard, Stradbally—in short, wherever such schools are needed. They have also undertaken boys' schools, and even boarding-schools, as the exigencies of time and place have required. This is especially the case with their Australian houses. At Madras they have been obliged to modify their rules in other respects, the better to adapt themselves to the wants of the East Indian Church; thus following their constitutions in the *spirit* which *vivifieth* rather than in the *letter* which *killeth*.

The Order of Mercy cannot *on principle* exclude any work of mercy, unless it interfere with those characteristic of the Institute, as the holy foundress frequently explained. To instruct the ignorant—whether rich or poor—is certainly a great work of mercy. Yet when the present Bishop of Bathurst applied to Charleville for Sisters for his distant see—where it was necessary they should open a boarding-school—lest there should be any difference of opinion as to whether “boarders” could be included among the igno-

rant whom the Sisters make a vow to instruct, or whether boarding-schools were to be regarded as exceptions which prove the rule, it was judged safest to apply to the Holy See for a decision, which was graciously granted by Pope Pius IX. to Bishop Quinn in the form of a sanction for opening schools of this class. "I found it happier and safer to have this sanction," writes the present worthy mother-superior of the Charleville convent, "since we had the facility of procuring it."

This was not the first time Rome was consulted relatively to the subject. When the illustrious and venerated founder of the Sisters of Mercy in the United States, Right Rev. Michael O'Connor, S.J., first Bishop of Pittsburgh, consulted Cardinal Barnabo as to the establishment of boarding-schools in connection with the Order of Mercy, then (1843) recently introduced into his diocese, his eminence declared that he saw no objection whatever to the Sisters of Mercy undertaking boarding-schools wherever it was judged necessary to establish them.

A more definite decision was recently sought by a worthy superiorress of opposite views, who besought the Holy See to abolish schools of this kind in all the houses of the Order of Mercy, if they were really contrary to its spirit. But the views of Bishop O'Connor, Bishop Quinn, and other eminent divines were sustained, and though the application of that zealous lady was *considered*, it was not granted.

The writer, in common with hundreds, has frequently heard from the venerable foundress of the Order of Mercy in the United States that Mother McAuley, who in this and in other things was far in advance of her time, thought that boarding-schools would one day become a sort of necessity in many houses of her Institute, on account of the facilities they afford for training young persons who design to enter religion, and actually gave her leave to open one in Carlow in 1838. "I have always regretted," said

she in conclusion, "that I did not ask our beloved foundress to put her views on this point in writing." Certain it is that in several places the boarding-school and the select day-school have to be regarded as almost the only means of supplying educated subjects to the Institute.

The same venerable religious has also been frequently heard to say—as, indeed, may be gathered from the context—that Mother McAuley explained that the *lodgers* or *boarders* whom the Sisters are forbidden to receive are ladies who could not be considered pupils, and are known on two continents as *parlor-boarders*. If the Rule meant boarders *unrestrictedly*, then it must exclude orphans and inmates of the House of Mercy, who are boarders inasmuch as they board at the convent; and still more the inmates of the Training-Colleges for teachers, at the parent house and elsewhere, who are allowed, when able, to contribute towards their maintenance while studying in these institutions. In such French convents as receive elderly ladies who wish to live in retirement, but not as *religieuses*, and young girls to be educated, there is a wide difference between *pensionnaires* and *élèves-pensionnaires*. The Rule of the Sisters of Mercy strictly enjoins that ladies of the former class be never admitted to their convents, with the exception of a foundress or very particular benefactress.

It is, nevertheless, undoubted that the spirit of the Institute is devotedness to the poor, that every good work undertaken by its members should be directed so as to benefit the poor, directly or indirectly, and that a vast majority of its members ought to be, as they actually are, employed in works of mercy which benefit the lower classes directly. This, so far as the writer has been able to learn, is universally the case. The schools of the Sisters of Mercy in Pittsburgh, for instance, opened this year (1881) with an actual attendance of poor children considerably in excess of 5,000; while their academy and boarding-school did not probably receive one hundred pupils each. So that, as the

decree of its confirmation distinctly states, the "Society" of the Sisters of Mercy "is *chiefly*," not *solely*, "devoted to the succor of the poor."

We must now return to the holy woman whose tears and prayers and labors did so much to cement the Charleville foundation—Mother Angela. Those whom this accomplished superior trained and directed in the divine service had quite a different opinion of her abilities from what she herself entertained. Her spiritual daughter and successor in office writes :

" Mother Mary Angela Dunne, foundress of the Charleville convent, died on the 12th of December, 1863, in the seventy-fifth year of her age and thirty-first of her profession, thirty-four years after her first reception by Mother McAuley, after having governed the community of Charleville in meekness and humility for twenty-seven years. The death of Mother Angela was answerable to her life—quiet, calm, and saintly. Though our foundress, and our head for so many years, never did there move among us a more humble soul—one whose life was so truly hidden in God. She was like a child in the house, and ruled the community almost by example alone. She died in the odor of sanctity, not having, as Dr. Croke remarked of her, a single unmortified passion."

The very faults of this holy woman "leaned to virtue's side." The foundress once, and perhaps oftener, blamed her for indiscreet fasting. For she would not allow in her ascetic contemporary, or in any one else over whom she had control, any practice of mortification calculated to incapacitate her for a day, or even an hour, from the active duties of the Institute upon which she set so much store.

Being the oldest of the *First Seven*,\* and for many years

\* Of the *First Seven* received January 23, 1832, two withdrew to join other orders and five became professed Sisters of Mercy, viz. : Sister M. Teresa Macaulay, who died in Dublin, 1833 ; Sister Mary Frances Warde, still living (1881); Sister M. Angela Dunne, who died in Charleville, 1863 ; Sister M. Clare Moore, who died in London,

the only one remaining in Ireland, except the invalided Mother di Pazzi Delany—who had no experience of foundations, having never left the parent house—Mother Angela was often appealed to, as one deeply in the confidence of the foundress, on questions that came up for discussion as the Institute of which she had seen the humble beginnings advanced in years. Thus, when asked by the mother-superior of the Kinsale convent whether it was customary in Mother McAuley's time for Sisters of Mercy to drive out merely for health's sake, she sent the following reply :

“CONVENT OF MERCY, ST. JOSEPH'S, }  
“CHARLEVILLE, March 31, 1862. ”

“ DEAR REVEREND MOTHER : In reply to your question I beg to say that our beloved foundress, as long as I was with her ('29-'36), never allowed any Sister to go out to drive for the sake of health ; and I am perfectly aware that her wishes were against it, as she expressed to me some time before her death her decided objection and disapproval. When such a practice had been introduced into one of her foundations she spoke to me in very strong terms against it.

“ With affectionate love for you, and each dear Mother and Sister, sincerely yours in our Lord,

“ SISTER MARY ANGELA DUNNE.”

This shows how fully Mother Angela had seized the spirit of the foundress, which was that, except as regards duty or the performance of the works of mercy, the Sisters of Mercy should be as cloistered as Carmelite nuns. Persons who spend five or six hours a day teaching, visiting the sick and the public institutions, and who, in a spirit of obedience to rule and holy poverty, perform daily a fair amount of manual labor, will scarcely suffer from want of exercise. But when sick-calls were so distant that a conveyance became necessary, advantage might be taken of

that circumstance to select for the visitation Sisters whose health might be benefited by the drive. It was also considered allowable to choose the most healthful way to reach sick-calls, even though it were not the shortest.

Reverend mother's usual sagacity was not at fault in the veneration and confidence she cherished for Very Rev. Dr. Croke, nor was she singular in her high appreciation of this fine old priest. Her accomplished successor in Baggot Street, Mother M. Vincent Whitty, when speaking of all this zealous priest had done for the Order in general and the Charleville house in particular, remarked that she feared the Sisters, so long blessed with his guidance, "ne'er should look upon his like again." By his exertions, singularly blessed by God, he built the fine convent now occupied by the prosperous community whose feeble beginnings he so tenderly fostered. And when it became too small for the ever-increasing Sisterhood it was he who considerably enlarged it.

"From first to last," writes a member of the community, "he was a most sincere and practically kind friend to the community, and was ever ready to work energetically to forward its interests. He was over forty years in connection with the Sisters of Mercy, and at his precious death (1872) he constituted the Sisters and the poor his only heirs."

From this it appears that Dr. Croke was acquainted with the Sisters of Mercy four years previous to their establishment in Charleville.

NOTE.—By the kind permission of Right Rev. James O'Connor, Bishop of Dibona and Vicar-Apostolic of Nebraska, we give his lordship as authority for the particulars of the conversation to which we have referred on page 153 between the deceased brother of that eminent prelate Right Rev. Michael O'Connor, first Bishop of Pittsburgh, and his Eminence Cardinal Barnabo. Bishop O'Connor (Pittsburgh) more than once mentioned to several Sisters of Mercy in his diocese and outside of it various conversations to the same effect which he had the honor to hold with their Holinesses Pope Gregory XVI. and Pope Pius IX.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### CONCLUSION OF CHARLEVILLE FOUNDATION.

Filiations—Bathurst—Bishop Quinn—The last Glimpse of Erin—Voyage to Sydney—Novitiate in Aid of Bathurst—Buttevant Convent—New Inn—Houses connected though not in the same Diocese—Reasons—Archbishop Croke Nephew to Mother McAuley's Friend at Charleville—Rev. John Ryan—Sacred Sites—Remark.

THE Charleville community was almost thirty years established before it ventured to send out a colony, and the first successful applicant for one was Right Rev. Matthew Quinn, Bishop of Bathurst, New South Wales. A sort of link between the present and the past, Mother M. Ignatius Croke, niece to "the fine old priest" who occupies so distinguished a place in the Charleville memoirs, was selected for this mission. The zealous religious had, no doubt, heard much of Oceanica already, for her brother, Dr. Thos. W. Croke, now Archbishop of Cashel, was then at the Antipodes as Bishop of Auckland, New Zealand, and an uncle of hers, James Croke, Esq., had been solicitor-general in New South Wales.

Four other professed Sisters and two novices were also selected from the volunteers to join Mother M. Ignatius, and all set sail for their distant home in the good ship *Empress*, lying off Queenstown, July 20, 1866. Two bishops, Dr. Quinn, of Bathurst, and Dr. James Murray, of Maitland, with several priests, a large contingent of students, Sisters of Mercy from Baggot Street for Geelong and Brisbane, and Presentation nuns for Tasmania, were among their fellow-passengers in this missionary ship.

This was indeed a sacrifice ; for never does Irishman or Irishwoman leave the Emerald Isle but with sad heart and tearful eyes. This passionate love of country does but enhance the willing sacrifice of those who go forth to distant lands to bring souls to Christ. Who ever loved "faultless Ireland" like that greatest of her missionary sons, St. Columba, who bewailed his melancholy exile in strains the echoes of which, resounding through twelve centuries, we cannot hear without emotion to-day :

" "O Arran, my sun ! my love is with thee in the west."

There is a gray eye which ever turns to Erin ; but never in this life shall it see Erin, nor her sons, nor her daughters. From the high prow I look over the sea, and great tears are in my gray eye when I turn to Erin—to Erin, where the songs of the birds are so sweet, and where the priests sing like the birds ; where the young are so gentle and the old so wise ; where the men are so noble and the women so fair."

"The first night closed upon us at sea," writes one of our exiles. "The hills of the old land were disappearing from our sight. We all gathered together on the poop to catch once more the shadowy outlines which were fast fading from us in darkness and distance. The sternest nature would have melted on such an occasion. Some of the Sisters cast themselves on their knees, and their white and black veils mingled in picturesque confusion on the deck. Hands were lifted to heaven, and the last glimpse of Erin was caught through an irresistible flood of burning tears."

But the wailing did not continue long. Next day the Sisters seemed as free from the pangs of nostalgia as if they had lain a night on the broad, flat stone, known as St. Columba's, in Donegal, which is said to be a specific for that agonizing disease. In the following letter Bishop Quinn gives a lively and pleasant picture of his charge during the voyage :

“ Most of the nuns have been able to go to communion as regularly as when at home ; and most of the other passengers have been to their duty. The nuns have many of the charges they had at home, and go through them with great regularity. True, like their floating convent, some of them are on rather a miniature scale. Their school, for instance, numbers but one pupil—the captain’s son, a boy of seven. The adult class for instruction is larger, numbering fourteen or fifteen persons. They have plenty of needle and other manual labor, which keeps them constantly employed. The poop serves at once as a community room, a novitiate, and a pleasure-ground ; and you could scarcely enjoy a more picturesque view than it presents from nine in the morning till nine at night. At one corner you see five or six white veils, with perhaps a black one in the centre, plying the needle, reciting the office, or sending up a fervent prayer to heaven on bended knees ; at another a number of black veils following the avocation of the hour ; three or four pacing the deck in silence with slow and measured steps and downcast eyes, or mayhap with a light, quick step, genial air, and hearty laugh. They do not, indeed, enjoy the same privacy as at home in these different exercises, but the intruders are either of the cloth or the captain and officers on duty, and hence are not much minded.

“ I doubt not that the fervent prayer, the busy finger, the hearty laugh, the innocent amusement, are as prevalent on board the *Empress* as in most convents at home. At all events, one thing you may be assured of—amongst the nuns there is *piety*, happiness, and health, notwithstanding the shortcomings of their floating convent. The different apartments above mentioned occasionally shift with the wind, but our reverend mothers and their commands have become so well versed in nautical terms and the movements of the ship that the thing is done in a moment, and there is more a variety than an inconvenience. For instance,

you hear a tiny voice gently whisper, 'Luff,' and the novitiate is lightened by two points to windward of the mizzen-mast, and the community-room becomes almost concealed by the life-boat and hen-pens, with the regularity and quickness with which Jack, at the captain's command, tightens the main-sail or hoists the flying-jib. At another time the same voice breathes in gentle accents, 'Leeward,' and the convent is transferred from one side of the ship to the other in less time than I take to tell it. In a word, so naturally does everything appear that you would say our good nuns had been trained on the bosom of old Neptune's dominions."

After the voyage of which the bishop gives this lively description the *Empress* cast anchor in the beautiful Bay of Sydney, October 21, 1866, and this happy community scattered, each branch to its own destination. The bishop conveyed Mother M. Ignatius and her flock to their future home, far away from the fair city of Sydney.

Bathurst, which belongs rather to the colonial part of this history, has been a happy and prosperous settlement. The community exceeds seventy, and has had but one death in the fifteen years of its existence. The Sisters direct denominational schools, training-colleges for teachers, out-schools, orphanages, and boarding-schools. To facilitate the labors of the Australian Sisterhood, the Charleville community has opened a novitiate for Bathurst, from which reinforcements are frequently sent. During the first years of its existence twenty-five missionaries were sent from Charleville to New South Wales.

"We have found this," writes the zealous projector of the missionary college, "to be an excellent means of preserving the valuable lives of our Sisters who were pioneers of the mission."

Verily, this last institution is after Mother McAuley's own heart. We have shown in her *Life* how tenderly she fostered the houses she established; how frequently she

visited them ; how minutely she made herself acquainted with all their details ; how she rejoiced in their prosperity and sympathized in their afflictions. Except Naas and Wexford, every convent founded in her lifetime affiliated from Dublin. And we have it in her own handwriting that she wished the mother-superior who sent Sisters to these towns to look after them continually, to visit and assist them. The following extract from a letter which she wrote to the mother-superior of Carlow convent, in February, 1841, shows clearly her views on this point :

“ I am rejoiced to hear that you are going to Wexford. I often meditated writing a petition to Dr. Haly to that effect, but was afraid of being a busybody. I have found a second visit to a branch exceedingly useful—not for anything we can say or do, for our experience in the religious life has been so short that a good, faithful Sister to whom God has imparted grace may be said to know as much of the spiritual life as we do. Yet it is most useful to give assistance for some time. It animates beginners and gives confidence to others. I have been told that it made parents and guardians give countenance and say that they could not fear a failure where such attention was given, not only by their own bishop, but also by the bishop from whose diocese the Sisters came. It bespeaks a warm interest in the success of the new branch, and will be found conducive thereto. It was thought we could not succeed in Galway, where there were five old established nunneries. On our second visit the bishop, Dr. Browne, said from the altar :

“ ‘ It is impossible that the Order of Mercy should fail, where such unity and such affectionate interest are maintained as bring its members hundreds of miles to encourage and aid one another. It is their established practice to look after what has been newly commenced.’ ”

“ Several persons told me that these words were more useful to us than I could suppose.”

It is not too much to say that to no branch ever founded by her Institute would Mother McAuley give a heartier *God-speed* than to the noviceship in Charleville in aid of her overworked children on the distant Australian mission.

In 1879 the Charleville community opened a branch house at Buttevant, a small garrison town in the County Cork, some twenty miles southwest of Charleville, at the request of Most Rev. John McCarthy, Bishop of Cloyne. It was a pious lady of Rathclare, Miss Walsh, who first thought of introducing the Sisters of Mercy into Buttevant, and for that purpose bequeathed at her death seven hundred pounds. A splendid convent was built for the Sisters, chiefly through the exertions of the pastor, Rev. Timothy Buckley, better known in these regions as Father Tim. Large free-schools and a pay-school were opened at once, and are now, with several other works of mercy, in successful operation in the Buttevant convent.

Later in the same year a branch was established at New Inn, County Tipperary, in the ancient diocese of Cashel, on the invitation of Most Rev. Thomas W. Croke, Archbishop, and Rev. John Ryan, parish priest of New Inn. By a special arrangement, of which there are many instances in the history of the Institute, the New Inn convent, though in a different diocese, remains subject to the Charleville house. On account of the necessity for centralization that exists in many places, and chiefly as regards houses founded in towns where the Catholic population is small and the state of religion and education so backward that vocations cannot be expected, and where there are no facilities for giving subjects the strict and careful novitiate upon which so much of their future proficiency and capability depends, Rome has never refused its sanction to arrangements of this kind, which, indeed, are likely to multiply in the future, especially in missionary countries—always countries of exceptions and dispensations and special legislation.

The Rule is always kept when the end of an Institute is accomplished ; in cases in which the fulfilment of a law would be ruinous to the body the authorities endeavor to practise the higher degrees of prudence, as St. Thomas explains, and, penetrating the intentions of the legislator—which are to preserve and defend the body, and sustain it in its primitive fervor and usefulness—those persons expressively called “of good counsel” adopt the means necessary to that end, which are always in the *spirit*, if not in the *letter*, of a Rule. For there are cases in which *the letter killeth, but the spirit always vivifieth*.

The Archbishop of Cashel is nephew to Mother McAuley's early friend and benefactor of the same name, and has ever been a father to her children, whether as a simple priest in the diocese of Cloyne, or as a bishop at Auckland, New Zealand, and an archbishop at Thurles. “Special mention should be made of this fine old priest,” writes our Charleville correspondent, speaking of Father Ryan, and she adds, “No priests like the old ones,” which would certainly be true if all old priests were like this fine specimen of the cloth. The exquisite Convent of Mercy, New Inn, near Cahir, was erected at his sole expense ; and on the arrival of the Sisters he at once made it over to them, with sixty acres of land, in a high state of cultivation, for the support of its inmates. This convent, situated in a rich agricultural district near the bright and beautiful Suir, is one of the loveliest retreats the Institute possesses, and a blessing to the whole surrounding country.

It is a little singular—or rather it is not, in a country so girdled with monasteries in Catholic times that one was within sight of another—that many convents of the Institute have risen on or near the ruins of similar institutions of the olden time. Close to New Inn is the site of an ancient Augustinian priory suppressed by Queen Elizabeth, and leased by her to one Peter Sherlock. At Ballybeg, or the little town, near Buttevant, are the noble remains of a

priory of the same order, which was wrested from its lawful owners by the same honest lady. And at Buttevant the exquisite ruins of the Franciscan monastery founded by one of the Barrys in the thirteenth century give a melancholy interest to a lively and stirring town.

We shall take leave of Charleville and its filiations with a hope that the new religious who have taken possession of these ancient places, once hallowed by the footsteps of saints, may never prove unworthy of such glorious traditions.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### MOTHER McAULEY AND HER CARLOW FRIENDS.

New Applications—Bishop Kinsella's declined—Dr. Edward Nolan—Mother McAuley's Nephews at Carlow College—Dr. Fitzgerald and Father Maher, Martyrs and Confessors—Extraordinary Charities of Father Maher—His *Life* by Bishop Moran—Mother McAuley's intimate Relations with the Carlow Clergy—Effects of the Administration of a truly great Mind—Cardinal Cullen—The old Doctor—The peculiar President—Tender and grateful Friendship shown him by Mother McAuley.

AFTER Mother McAuley's return from Charleville applications continued to flow in upon her at a rate which she considered alarming. The Bishop of Cork was actually in the house for a colony when she reached St. Mary's, though the business of the Cork foundation was not concluded till six months later. Her great friend, Most Rev. William Kinsella, who was destined to do her the only favor he would gladly decline in her regard—to preside at her obsequies—came for Sisters to take charge of a retreat for servants out of work which he proposed to establish in Kilkenny. Eager to relieve poverty without waiting until it should be accompanied by crime, this zealous young prelate preferred the House of Mercy to all other branches of the Institute; for, though willing to weary himself in seeking the lost sheep of his flock, he preferred that none should be lost, if it were in his power to hinder such a calamity. So great was his zeal for protecting young persons whose poverty and inexperience exposed them to danger that he frequently sent girls of this class to the House of Mercy in Dublin, his bounty enabling them to undertake what was then considered a long and expensive journey. But the house he offered—a sort of castle over an arched

gateway through which the public had right of passage day and night—was declined as unsuitable for the contemplated institution.

Strange to say, although Dr. Kinsella was the first applicant for a branch of her Institute, and was, moreover, a devoted friend and enthusiastic admirer of the holy foundress, there were but four Convents of Mercy in the diocese of Ossory forty years after his first application.

It gave reverend mother unfeigned pleasure to perceive that any ecclesiastic was more than commonly gifted with virtue and other qualities useful in drawing souls to God ; this was the secret of her affection and esteem for Bishop Kinsella, who had been a favorite pupil of her friend Dr. Doyle, and was a leading churchman in Ireland during the latter years of her life.

But the prelate whom the holy mother loved and esteemed above all others—Bishop Blake excepted—was Most Rev. Edward Nolan, the immediate successor of Dr. Doyle in the united sees of Kildare and Leighlin. As student, as priest, and as professor he had highly distinguished himself on several occasions, and is described at two of these stages of his career, by a most competent judge,\* as “a young priest of rarest humility and virtue,” whose “strong natural talents were developed by careful cultivation,” and who “in *belles-lettres* evinced exquisite taste.” While professor of theology in Carlow College, 1834, he was elected coadjutor to his beloved master, and a little later had the melancholy privilege of consoling his last moments and closing his eyes in death.

For years reverend mother had been acquainted with this eminent divine and most of the clergy of the diocese—a circumstance which certainly did not lessen her innate elevation of soul or her zeal in the cause of God. When she assumed the guardianship of her three orphan nephews, in February, 1829, she immediately placed them in the lay

\* Dr. Fitzpatrick in his *Life of Dr. Doyle*.

department of Carlow College, which Dr. Doyle had described some years before as “undoubtedly the best school in Ireland.” To several of the faculty she felt she owed a debt of gratitude for kindness to these dear young converts. From the first there was much communication between Carlow and St. Mary’s, for Dr. Fitzgerald, president, was her life-long friend. He had been connected with the college for more than a generation, and was never looked upon as a lesser light till that brilliant luminary, Dr. Doyle, appeared on the scene in 1813.

In these days of Tithe Agitation Dr. Fitzgerald occasionally played the *rôle* of confessor, and even of martyr. A sad figure enough he made when, having adopted the policy of passive resistance, he allowed the tithe-collectors to seize all he possessed. And, like another St. Paul, he knew what it was to be arrested and imprisoned for a good cause—reiterated refusal to pay “ministers’ money”—for the venerable doctor was not only a holy man, but also a stanch patriot.

Another Carlow priest between whom and reverend mother there existed a strong and tender friendship was Father James Maher, whom we shall often meet in these pages. Born in 1793, and ordained priest at Rome, he spent several years under the immediate superintendence of Dr. Doyle—a circumstance to which he frequently referred with pride and pleasure, and which had immense influence in shaping his future ecclesiastical career. In the premature death of that illustrious prelate, broken down with labors and sufferings, Father Maher experienced his first great sorrow. Nor did his removal by death lessen the enthusiasm of his loving disciple, as is proved by a touching item in his will—drawn up forty years later, 1834-1874—which bequeaths “twenty pounds a year to keep in repair the statue of the Right Rev. James Doyle,” whose memory he worshipped. It was Father Maher who administered the last sacraments to this great prelate; nor was Dr. Doyle

the only bishop for whom he performed the same consoling but mournful function.

Father Maher was administrator of the parish of Carlow when the Sisters of Mercy arrived, 1837, but his interest in them did not cease when he was transferred to the professor's chair toward the end of the same year. He was among the foremost preachers of his time, and a delightful letter-writer; though, unhappily, most of his letters of friendship and direction are not available just now. His eloquent tongue no less than his able pen upheld the interests of religion, and powerfully pleaded for the poor and oppressed, with unfailing zeal and energy for the fifty-three years of his sacerdotal life. Twice he refused the mitre, and when a very young priest he was selected by Dr. Doyle for the presidency of the Irish College at Rome when Dr. Blake, on account of ill-health, resigned in 1828. But Father Maher declined that honorable office.

Like his friend Dr. Fitzgerald, Father Maher was a personal sufferer during the Tithe Agitation. And, *par noble fratrum*, his brother Patrick was cast into prison no less than four times, and repeatedly suffered his goods and chattels to be auctioned, rather than pay a tax which was the most unjust tribute ever extorted by the strong from the weak.

Mother McAuley and Father Maher had many traits in common, among which may be reckoned intense and enthusiastic devotion to the church and the poor.

"Father Maher scarcely kept sufficient for his clothing; his diet was so meagre that in very compassion some of his fellow-priests used to bring him to dinner, knowing what a poor one, if any, he would have at home. His brothers left a sum of money with his sister, Mrs. Cullen, to give him a little every week, that he might not feel the pressure of want too severely."\*

\* *Memoir of Father Maher.* By his grand-nephew, Most Rev. Patrick Francis Moran, Bishop of Ossory.

His relations were all in easy circumstances, and some wealthy; but their continual benefactions to him either went to the poor or to some religious institution devoted to the poor. Once his brothers made him a present of two thousand pounds. The money, as was beautifully said, "just touched his hand for a blessing," and was immediately divided between the poor and his favorite institution. This worthy follower of his Master used to say that no miser ever felt as much pleasure in amassing wealth as he did in giving it away to the needy.

It was a grievous affliction to this man of God when his revered friend, Mother McAuley, passed away in 1841. Some of his most finished sermons were preached at receptions and professions at her request. The last days of this grand old man were fondly and reverently tended by her dear children, whom he loved to call "Angels of Charity" and "my own nuns."

Father Francis Haly, who succeeded Bishop Nolan, was also a devoted friend to reverend mother, who describes his character as "most amiable." During the fifteen years he survived her he never ceased to love and revere her precious memory.

Mother McAuley was personally better known in Carlow than in any other place into which her Institute spread, and she had more intimate relations with the clergy of Carlow than with those of Dublin. If she saw them not in their palmiest days—the time of St. Brigid, to whom the see of Kildare owes its existence—she knew their diocese in the glory of its second spring, when the eyes of the Catholic world were turned towards it in admiration, love, and triumph. And when the sun that attracted the gaze of the world set on that bright June Sunday, 1834, she felt that the reflection of its brilliant rays would not wholly cease to illumine the horizon in the gloaming that followed that sad setting.

Wherever a great mind rules, whether in kingdom, or dio-

cese, or community, or family, it leaves its stamp for generations. This is peculiarly true of the diocese which the illustrious "J. K. L." administered with such vigor and wisdom. Its educational institutions, which bring learning within the reach of the poorest, bear a high literary character to-day, and the intellectual superiority of the Carlow priests is universally acknowledged.

Among a host of distinguished men, Cardinal Cullen began his studies for the priesthood in Carlow under Dr. Doyle—an advantage to which his eminence loved to revert, and which he appreciated as one of the greatest blessings of his life. It was in Carlow that Mother McAuley first met the future cardinal, and she loved him at once for the sake of his uncle, Father Maher, but finally for his own sake. He used to say that her common sense charmed him, and that she was a woman filled with the Spirit of God. When rector of the Irish College at Rome Dr. Cullen rendered her and her Institute many important services. It was his pupil and dear friend, Bishop O'Connor, who introduced the Sisters of Mercy into the United States, partially at his suggestion.

Mother McAuley's connection with Carlow made her Institute known at once throughout the sees of Kildare and Leighlin, of which it is the episcopal town. Dr. Fitzgerald was her friend and counsellor in the dark early days when several other ecclesiastics persecuted her, or distrusted her, or kept aloof. In July, 1838, she wrote to him : "The sincere and affectionate concern which you, my dear sir, have ever manifested makes me desirous to communicate everything to you." And again : "You see I must tell you all, since I know you are so greatly interested. I can never forget, my dear sir, all the animating hope you created in my mind when we were rising out of nothing."

In 1834 and the following year Dr. Fitzgerald went to Dublin several times to confer with reverend mother on the feasibility of introducing her congregation into Carlow.

He was no novice in the difficult business of inaugurating religious houses. In conjunction with Bishop Delany and Dean Staunton he had established the Presentation nuns in Carlow, and he induced various benefactors to help them in their early struggles. Nor was he unconcerned in the Maryborough foundation made by the same order, under Bishop Doyle, in 1824.

It cannot be affirmed that the good doctor increased in amiability as he neared the eighties ; and those obliged to transact business with him did not always find it the pleasantest task in the world. The diocese then boasted many eminent men, but most of them were mere boys in the estimation of the president—boys who needed to be taken care of themselves rather than assume the direction of others. Even his best friends—and he had many good ones—found him somewhat eccentric, and Dr. Doyle had styled him “the peculiar president.” Reverend mother was especially grateful to him for his kindness to the orphan sons of her beloved sister, and the deep religious impressions he had made on their young hearts, daily evidenced by their good conduct when they ceased to be under his guidance. Her children found his little peculiarities more amusing than annoying, but she would not see them as such at all. Her friendship was rather sweetened and sanctified by the tender compassion she felt for him as the pains and weaknesses of age began to cling somewhat ungracefully about him. He wished to be the father and friend, and the only father and friend, of her and hers ; and though his kindness was such as to be occasionally somewhat oppressive, it was always received with grateful appreciation by her whom he ever styled his “dearest old friend.”

But until Dr. Nolan came to Dublin to seek a colony at her hands, in 1836, there was no serious discussion on the subject of the projected establishment of Sisters of Mercy at Carlow.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### CARLOW CONVENT ESTABLISHED.

The new Bishop—The Legacy—The Carlow Foundation—Obstacles—Reverend Mother's Sagacity in the Selection of Superiors—Precious Deaths—Intense Love of the Sisters for their Mother—Temptation—Resolution—Capability of the Superiors appointed by Mother McAuley—The Carlow Sisters set out April, 1837—A great Ovation—St. Brigid—First Day in Carlow—A pleasant Foundation—Dr. Nolan—Mother McAuley summoned to Dublin—Sickness—Recovery—Hopeless Illness of Sister Mary Agnes Macaulay, “the innocent, playful Catherine.”

THE priest who seemed most crushed by the blow when the great spirit of “J. K. L.” passed away—Father Edward Nolan—was destined to take up the burden which had weighed so heavily on the departed prelate. The gentle episcopate of Bishop Nolan, following the vigorous reign of Dr. Doyle—as the peaceful James succeeded the regal Elizabeth—gave the people a sort of rest from dazzling greatness, though the timid and retiring prelate made a good, and even a great, bishop. He did the whole of his duty as a ruler in the Church of God, and did it well; but it was suspected, and not causelessly, that he would rather have his noble head shrouded in a cowl than graced by a mitre. He was eminent in all the virtues that shine in the cloister.

A legacy of seven thousand pounds bequeathed to this prelate in 1836, by a hard-working man who kept a delft-shop in Carlow, was the immediate cause which led to the completion of the arrangements for the establishment of a Convent of Mercy in that town. He at once urged reverend mother to expedite the business.

“Give me,” said he, “a small colony of your fervent children, and I will take upon myself the whole responsibility of their maintenance. The house prepared is not exactly what we should wish, but we will soon build. The interest of Michael Nowlan’s money, given them in perpetuity, will enable them to begin at once their labors among the sick and poor. I am not rich, but I promise that my spiritual children will never want necessaries. As a small donation and a proof of my affection, I give them the convent and grounds, and every year while I live I will give them one hundred pounds, which if they do not want themselves they can bestow on the poor. This little gift, however, is to be a secret ; for, if known, it might prevent the benefactions of others.”

Early in 1837 the Carlow establishment was seriously talked of, and there was some speculation as to the Sisters likely to be chosen for that mission. Since the foundation of Tullamore and Charleville reverend mother began to realize some of the difficulties of spreading a new congregation, not the least of which was that, if she would supply the demand now made on her, she must separate from all her elder children, to whom she was devotedly attached. Indeed, her *temptation* was to form and reciprocate those particular attachments against which she so strongly cautions her children in the Rules. She appears to have been especially fond of her secretary, Sister M. Frances Warde, who had also been her assistant since Mother Marianne Doyle’s transfer to Tullamore, 1836. Another member particularly dear to her was Sister Veronica Corrigan, a lay Sister of great virtue, who had been her maid at Coolock, and whom, indeed, she had adopted and reared from infancy. Reverend mother could scarcely bring herself to part with either of these, which she afterwards deplored as a “reserve” with God, and thanked Him for having sent what she called “the remedy.”

Early in February, 1837, Sister Veronica was stricken

with typhus fever of a fearfully malignant character, and, despite the most careful nursing and the most skilful physicians, the sweet young creature died on the fourth day in terrible agony.

As the bereaved mother watched the hectic of fever fade into the pallid hues of death she made a resolution which was never broken: henceforth she "reserved" none, even in thought. She gave to the new houses those most capable of promoting their prosperity, no matter how dear they were or how indispensable to her comfort as capable assistants. Her dear Sister Veronica had passed, she humbly hoped, from her bed of pain to her Father's bosom. Sister M. Frances was immediately detailed for the Carlow mission.

Reverend mother was passionately beloved by all her children, and she loved each with a special affection, so that there was not one in the whole Institute who did not conceive herself to be the object of particular esteem and love on the part of her mother in God. The Sister just alluded to, now a venerable religious who has lived beyond the limit commonly allotted to man, said to the writer: "I don't know how I survived the parting from reverend mother"; and, speaking of death: "I often think of the heaven to which it will give entrance, but to me it would be heaven in itself to see dearest reverend mother once more." It was inexpressibly touching to see the emotion of this ancient religious, whose tears flowed as copiously at the remembrance as they did at the reality of that sorrowful parting forty-three years before.

But despite this love—passing even the love of women—and despite the fact that foundations were a terror and that each Sister's ambition was "to live and die with reverend mother," no member ever opposed her selection by Mother McAuley for a new mission. The least indication of her will was a law not to be gainsaid even in thought. This was due partly to the spirit of sacrifice

she developed in her children, and partly to the feeling that animated all that she was utterly devoid of human respect and sought only the will of God in every appointment she made and every good work she inaugurated.

In the selection of superiors reverend mother's judgment and penetration were infallible. She never made an appointment which she was afterwards obliged to revoke; and few are the rulers of whom as much can be said, for, though God gives superiors His authority, He does not always or necessarily dower them in a high degree with His wisdom, His prudence, His foresight. Every superior whom Mother McAuley appointed spent her whole life in governing others as superior, or vice-superior, or novice-mistress. Some, as Mother Angela Dunne, Mother Clare Moore, Mother Elizabeth Moore, Mother Josephine Warde, etc., having served the six years of their first appointment and the two terms of election allowed by the Constitutions, were directed by the Holy See to assume again, and in many cases for life, the burdens they would gladly transfer to younger shoulders at any time, but especially when years, labors, and infirmities had broken their constitutions and warned them that their day was now far spent.

There is no instance known to the writer where any greater release was allowed to a superior appointed by Mother McAuley than a change from one office to another—from mother-superior to mother-assistant, for example.

For the Carlow house reverend mother selected Sister M. Frances Warde, with the understanding that she was to return to St. Mary's when the new branch became sufficiently matured to be able to spare her. But some four years later the holy foundress passed to a brighter world, and her former secretary was never recalled to the parent house, being destined for a higher purpose, as will be shown in the sequel.

Unforeseen, and even melancholy, events continued to

delay the Carlow business. The sweet child Veronica had no sooner closed her eyes on earth than it became evident that Sister M. Rose Lubé was likely to follow her. "Two Sisters shall always go out together," says the Rule, and it was noticed that the Sisters were often summoned to heaven in pairs, so to speak. Exhaustion and hectic fever indicated consumption in this case; but none of its more painful symptoms were present, and she continued to fade away gently as a departing sunbeam. When weakness hindered her from sharing the active duties she begged leave to sew for the poor; and reverend mother, to amuse her, used to bring her sundry pieces of bright-colored silks and ribbons to make "Patrick's Crosses," such as the children in Ireland wear on their shoulders on the festival of the great apostle who taught their ancestors to glory in the cross of Christ. A goodly pile of crosses soon garnished the infirmary table, and the dying Sister was cheered by the hope of contributing to the happiness of a few decent old women, who lived by peddling trifles, by furnishing their baskets for the national feast, which she was not to live to see. On the 11th of March she sank back gently on her pillows, rested her transparent fingers, and softly closed her too brilliant eyes. The Sisters had scarcely finished the prayers for the agonizing when their sweet young companion smiled her last adieu and fell asleep on her fond mother's bosom. Then the weeping infirmarian removed the unfinished "cross" from the bed of death.

Nothing about reverend mother was more contagious than her genuine, practical love for the poor, which was altogether free from mere sentimentality. The feeling which she communicated to most persons who approached her, but particularly her own children, was that they must not only love the poor, but help them, and work for them, and improve their condition, in some way or other, in soul and body.

At length all preparations for the foundation so long in

contemplation were finished, and reverend mother, accompanied by six Sisters, four of whom were to remain, set out for Carlow on the 10th of April, 1837. The morning was damp and gloomy, and the weather did not brighten much as the day wore on. The uneasy, jolting vehicle known as "Purcell's Mail-Coach," which had been chartered for the party, sped at something better than a snail's pace through the counties of Dublin and Kildare to the fair inland city of Carlow. As the Sisters approached their new home they found that the inclement weather had not prevented bishop, clergy, and laity from coming far outside the town to give them a hearty welcome. A goodly procession, or rather crowd, flanked the clumsy stage as the tired horses toiled slowly up to the coach-office—an important institution in those days. After many hearty greetings, and a fervent *Te Deum* in the cathedral, the travellers were escorted to the college, which stands in a noble, well-shaded park. The ancient president, who stood at the gate in all his dignity to receive them, led them to the great hall, which was brilliantly illuminated in their honor; the students—who, of course, had a holiday—welcomed their guests with deafening cheers and vigorous clapping. Never was "the president and provincial" in higher spirits; and in such a congenial atmosphere his glee was contagious. He expatiated on the beautiful qualities of his "dearest old friend" and her fair young daughters with more than Celtic effusiveness, and predicted "blessings," which he did not leave "untold," to the ancient diocese over whose Levites he had so long watched, through the advent of the new nuns, which would be fruitful in every species of good to their diocese—a diocese that proudly claims for its foundress a great and sainted woman.\*

\* St. Brigid is mentioned by Cogitosus as having "appointed" St. Conlaeth, the first bishop who ever ruled the diocese of Kildare. "But this," says Dr. Lanigan, "must be understood relatively to his having been chosen in consequence of her recommendation" (*Life of Dr. Doyle*, Fitzpatrick).

The doctor's speech, usually characterized by a pleasant quaintness, on this occasion was uncommonly facetious, and the applause that greeted his oratory was most vigorous. No doubt the dear, simple old man ended by thinking that speeches to introduce nuns were as much in his way as the reception and profession sermons he considered his *forte*.

These extraordinary doings half bewildered the weary travellers, to whom such honors were as distressing as they were unexpected. Next in order came a grand collation in the president's sanctum, during which plans were matured for prolonged festivities. But the bishop, simple and ascetic in his own tastes, easily divined the sentiments of his guests. He came to their relief by suggesting, in his gentle, timid way, that Braganza House (his own residence) and St. Patrick's College had contended for the honor of entertaining them at dinner, while a pressing invitation from the nuns entreated them to accept the hospitality of the Presentation convent. "And, of course," added the prelate, with subtle politeness, "neither the doctor nor myself would maintain a point against these ladies; but you shall decide for yourselves." This was joyful news. Reverend mother thanked his lordship and the president in her most gracious style; the rest of the party bowed their acknowledgments, and all got off to the Presentation convent as speedily as was consistent with good manners.

The nuns, who were as dear elder Sisters to the missionaries, lavished attentions on the foundress and her children; and the evening, now that the college was exchanged for the convent, was delightful for both parties. But Mother McAuley, anxious to begin her work at once, declined to remain over-night, and, by agreement, the bishop returned at nine to conduct the Sisters to their new home. Late as it was, they fitted up a temporary chapel, in which his lordship next morning offered the holy sacrifice of the Mass to obtain the divine blessing on the new enterprise.

The same day he blessed the house and dedicated it under the invocation of St. Leo, whose festival it was, and to whom he was signally devoted.

Mother McAuley often referred to Carlow as one of her pleasantest foundations. The kindness and attentions of the bishop and clergy were unceasing, and the people showed such a willingness to aid in every way that she never grew weary of extolling their goodness.

Of Dr. Nolan, who struck her as being a saint, and a saint of a high type, she used to say that she never knew any other ecclesiastic who brought our Divine Lord so forcibly to her mind. His meekness and charity, the grace and dignity of his demeanour, and the heavenly aspect of his countenance inspired veneration and affection, despite a constitutional timidity which, towards the end of his short life, had begun to wear off. He was such a guide as she had often begged of God to pilot her through the sea of difficulties that encompassed her; nor was he unwilling to undertake the task. But in this instance her ordinary fate pursued her, and just as Bishop Nolan had begun to interest himself deeply in herself and her Institute God called him home.

After a few days among these holy and congenial friends letters announcing that three of the Sisters had caught typhus fever while serving the sick recalled her to Dublin; and though the foundation business was still in a very unfinished state, she hastened with utmost speed to her suffering children. Owing to her fervent prayers, and probably also to her care and the soothing effect of her presence, the patients recovered. On returning to Carlow she was induced to bring her niece, Sister Mary Agnes Macaulay, then in an advanced stage of consumption, Dr. Fitzgerald insisting that the mild air of Carlow would have a beneficial effect on the sweet young invalid.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### DEATH OF BISHOP NOLAN.

Pension-School at Carlow—Rapid Progress—First Members of the Carlow House chosen to establish the Order in the United States—Father Andrew—Deaths—Little Catherine—Grief of the Foundress at her early Death—“Fit to unite with the Angels”—The Convent without the Cross—It comes at last—Fatal Illness of Bishop Nolan—A striking Circumstance—Last Moments of the Bishop—Death—Grief of the Sisters—Beautiful Letter from the Foundress—Mother Frances in 1837—Letter to Mother Josephine Warde—Other Letters—Another Death—Letter to Father Maher—To Mother Frances.

AT the request of the bishop and many of the most influential townspeople Mother McAuley opened a school at St. Leo's for children whose parents, though able to pay for their education, were unwilling to deprive them of the sweet, unstudied discipline of home-life, which, under favorable circumstances, is superior to any training that can be had elsewhere. This institution became very flourishing; and it was useful to the poor indirectly by the sentiments of considerate kindness and compassion for them which the Sisters took care to instil into the minds of their pupils, and directly by the large number of vocations to the Order which it produced.

No house established by the reverend mother progressed so rapidly as Carlow. Ladies of high social position and superior education crowded to the novitiate. Three first cousins of Cardinal Wiman, and a far larger number of the sisters, nieces, and cousins of Cardinal Cullen, chose Carlow for their *alma mater*. Dr. Maher, uncle of the latter, mentions fourteen of his near relatives, all Sisters of

Mercy. Ladies \* of these families who were distinguished for religious virtues and gifts of intellect were subsequently chosen to establish the Order of Mercy in the United States and other places.

The mother-superior was a native of the diocese, being the youngest daughter of John Warde, Esq., of Belbrook House, Queen's County. She had, when a child, received confirmation from the great Doctor Doyle, on which occasion she added *Teresa* to her baptismal name, *Frances*. Her mission to Carlow involved separation from her dearly-loved sister Sarah, then in the novitiate at St. Mary's, and since so widely and so favorably known as Mother M. Josephine Warde.

Four of the Sisters whom Mother McAuley lent to Carlow are still (1881) living: Mother Frances Warde is spending the placid evening of a busy life at the last of her foundations, Manchester, N. H.; Mother Ursula Frayne, who assisted in founding the first house in St. John's, Newfoundland, 1842, and, having returned to Dublin in 1843, went (1845) to West Australia, where she has founded many convents, and is still laboring in the divine service with all the zeal and energy of youth; Mother Teresa White, who went to England with the foundress in 1839, and (1840) was sent by her to open a house of the Institute in Galway, is now in Clifden; and Mother Josephine Trenor, first superioress of the Naas convent (1839), is at the Convent of Mercy, Westport, Ireland. This last was but a novice when sent to Carlow.

The early days at St. Leo's were enlivened by the humors of good Father Andrew, who gave many directions, always positive, often contradictory, of which reverend mother said: "Comply with his injunctions when you can; when you cannot, listen respectfully and say nothing: he

\* Two of these foundresses of the Pittsburgh convent died while still in the beautiful season of their first fervor—Sister M. Aloysia Strange, July 30, 1846, and Reverend Mother M. Josephine Cullen, April 21, 1852. R. I. P.

may forget." She never appeared to notice his eccentricities, though, with her natural penetration and genuine sense of humor, she could not have been unaware of them. His gifts were not always *without repentance*, as she learned when he sent his man to take back, at a most inconvenient moment, a present he had given her; himself awaiting the messenger behind a tree, laughing like a great school-boy at her discomfiture. The silence he maintained when offended was more eloquent than any words; and the silence of his "dearest old friend" whenever he revenged a fancied slight was equally eloquent.

To a correspondent who had hinted that he was nearing the interesting period of second childhood she wrote: "Believe me, there is as yet no diminution in the doctor's rational powers; they are as acute as ever, though they may not always be equally exercised." And, indeed, had every one been as careful of his feelings as his "dearest old friend" he would always have appeared at his very best.

Thus, when he posted off to Dublin to buy a habit of the finest description for a Sister who, he fancied, resembled a relative of his dead half a century, Mother McAuley desired the Sister to wear the garment a few times before him, adding: "If you said it was against the vow of poverty to wear anything so costly, that might seem like a correction and pain him, since he is supposed to know more about the vows than we."

Thus did our sweet and gentle spirit contrive to have rules observed without wounding the learned and the aged, always most sensitive; ever inculcating that, if there were a hundred regulations to be observed, *the greatest of these is charity*.

Sickness again recalled the holy mother to the cradle of her Order, and, accompanied by her beloved niece, she arrived at St. Mary's just in time to watch over the last days of a fine young Sister, Mary Aloysia Thorpe, whose death,

of a most virulent fever, she announces to Dr. Fitzgerald in a letter dated July 3, 1837. She acknowledges the receipt of several letters from him which were "very consoling," thanks him for a kind invitation to her nephew, Robert Macaulay, to spend the vacation with him at the college, and mentions her niece: "My poor little Catherine is as cheerful as ever, but no symptoms of returning strength." For news she tells him that five candidates had entered St. Mary's within a few weeks, and that the Cork foundation was about to set out, Bishop Murphy refusing to wait any longer for his promised colony.

The relief afforded the poor in Carlow, and the vast numbers instructed and prepared for the sacraments, gave the foundress indescribable joy. "You are truly happy in all the circumstances of your little foundation," she writes to Mother Frances. "I know of nothing like it. How thankful you should be to God that He has made provision for the poor about you!"

Indeed, St. Leo's was a regular old-fashioned foundation. The means given by the humble but royal hearted shopkeeper who was the real founder of the house, with other benefactions generously offered, were sufficient, economically administered, and in ordinary times, to relieve all the sick poor of the town. His brother, John Nowlan, gave the Sisters three thousand pounds to begin a new convent, and their sister, an elderly maiden lady, was equally liberal to the charities of the Institute. These good people had spent the greater part of their lives in hard, incessant labor and privations of every species, that they might have wherewith to make some sure provision for the sick and destitute. To know of such persons was as great a joy to the holy foundress as to be selected as the medium of applying their benevolence to the poor.

When reverend mother closed the eyes of her beloved niece and name-child, Catherine Macaulay—in religion Sister Mary Agnes—August 7, 1837, she naturally turns for

consolation under this bereavement to Dr. Fitzgerald, who had been as a father to that sweet, fair girl :

“ Our innocent Catherine,” she writes, August 8, “ is out of this miserable world. She died a little before twelve last night. Thanks be to God, she suffered very little—not more than an hour of distressed breathing—and her playfulness continued to the last, mingled with an occasional awful feeling, but nothing like melancholy. She received the last sacraments on Saturday with great fervor and delight. We feel just now as if all the house was dead, so sorry are we to part with our sweet, animated little companion. . . . The Sisters here are in retreat, except those engaged with me in the scene of sorrow. Thank God it is over! I know you will pray for me. As for *her*, I believe she was fit to unite with the angels, so pure, so sincerely devoted to God [was she] May I beg you to give my most affectionate love to my dearest Sisters, and to believe me, dear reverend sir, your attached and faithful

“ MARY CATHERINE McAULEY.”

“ Little Catherine’s great delight,” says Dean Murphy,\* “ was to perform with her own hands for poor little ones those kind offices which, though small in themselves, are proofs of a generous, affectionate heart and a soul overflowing with charity. Those who had the happiness of being associated with her in the performance of her duties as a member of the Sisterhood long preserved the recollection of her worth, and still speak of her with the most affectionate remembrance.”

On the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1837, reverend mother informs her children at St. Leo’s that her god-child, Teresa Byrne, has entered the novitiate “ to fill my dearest child’s vacancy.” She then apostrophizes the life of a Sister of Mercy : “ O blessed and happy life, which makes death so sweet!” But her thoughts are with the departed one, for she presently adds : “ Our dear Cathe-

\* *Irish Nunneries*, p. 156.

rine might indeed have sung in the last hours of her innocent life : 'O Death ! where is thy sting ?' for she did not seem to feel any."

Some months after Mother McAuley came to Carlow. The letter announcing this her third visit shows that her heart is still bleeding for the loss of her "sweet, animated little companion" :

"I hope to be in Carlow by half-past twelve Thursday night. I entreat that you will all go to bed as usual. I shall not be able to speak till morning. If you conveniently can, give me a place to rest *alone* in for a few hours, *but not where I was with my child.*"

For six months the Carlow house went on almost too smoothly, for it was Mother McAuley's doctrine that "without the cross the real progress cannot come." But the season for trial was at hand, the most bitter that could come upon her children, and wholly unexpected. The saintly bishop was called to "the rest that remaineth for the people of God." Well had he followed the counsel of the Sovereign Pontiff who had placed him—against his will, indeed—in the order of bishops : "Use the utmost diligence that peace, which is the bond of Christianity, may never be broken among clergy or people ; and for this you may expect to receive from Christ Jesus, who is the Prince of Pastors and of Peace, a reward suitable to your merits."

The foundress wrote from Cork, October 12, 1837, to Mother Frances : "I have just now heard with deep concern that Dr. Nolan has the fever. The manner in which it is reported gives me some hope that it may be a mistake. It is said he took it from his curate, and the priest who told me did not know how long the curate was dead."

From the first there was little hope of the bishop's recovery. His death had been foretold by a saintly young priest who fell a victim to the same terrible disease in 1835. A few hours before his (Father Duggan's) death, while Father Maher was conversing with him on heaven, its

happiness, and its glorious Queen, the dying priest bade him a last farewell and said :

“ I go, the others will soon follow ; you alone shall remain, and may God preserve you in the midst of a wicked world ! ” \*

Fathers Kelly and Byrne, curates, and Bishop Nolan, who were all in Braganza House at the time, passed away in less than two years. Father Maher became an octogenarian. It was he who watched over the last days of the young prelate with a devotedness at once filial and brotherly.

Surrounded by his sorrowing clergy, and reverently nursed by his dear children the Sisters of Mercy, Dr. Nolan departed this life in the odor of sanctity. He was perfectly conscious to the very act of dying, and Mother McAuley was inexpressibly touched to learn that the last words he spoke recommended herself and her children to Father Maher, in whom he placed unbounded confidence, and that his last act was to stretch out his dying hand in benediction over their heads. And when Father Maher would gently replace it, thinking his mind was wandering, the bishop caught his hand and placed it on the head of Mother Frances, who knelt nearest the bed. But his failing speech refusing to convey a last expression of tenderness for this Order, the Benjamin of his affections, the weeping Sisters interpreted his last act as if he had said, “ Be thou to them as I have been ” — a behest which Father Maher most loyally obeyed. More than once did Mother Frances describe to the writer this touching scene, nor could she speak of it almost half a century later without the deepest emotion.

A letter bearing the sad intelligence that no one now expected his recovery was followed by one describing the peaceful and glorious death of the prelate in whom the foundress had centred so many bright hopes ; still another

\* *Life of Father Maher.* By Bishop Moran.

told her of the passionate grief of the Sisters and the complete prostration of the superioress, who was unable to leave her bed for days after the melancholy occurrence.

Reverend mother at once despatched the following beautiful letter of condolence to Carlow. Although written on the Feast of St. Teresa, she is so absorbed by the tidings of a death of such grave import to her and hers that she omits offering the usual congratulation to her correspondent on the feast of her patroness :

“ **MY EVER-DEAR SISTER MARY TERESA :** I was partially prepared to receive the melancholy news conveyed in your letter. The dear, saintly bishop has got an early crown, and we have now a valued friend in heaven, whose advocacy will soon be experienced by those who humbly bend to the adorable will of God. My dear, affectionate Sister M. Frances will soon, I trust, edify you all by her perfect composure and entire resignation.

“ Submit we must, but we should do more : we should praise and bless the Hand that wounds us, and exhibit to all around us a calm appearance. I trust in God this will be manifested in you all, afflicted as you now are. When I promised to go to my dear Sister M. Frances in time of trial, you may be sure, my dear child, I did not mean the trial which death occasions, with which I am so familiarized that *the tomb never seems to be closed in my regard.* I alluded to the difficulties to which her new state exposed her, such as incurring the displeasure of her spiritual superiors without design, experiencing marks of disapprobation and not knowing why. These are some of the bitter sweets incident to our state, and most of all requiring counsel and support.

“ The sorrow in which she so deeply shares is extensively divided and is equally the affliction of many. The Presentation nuns, who were so long his spiritual children, had not, I suppose, the comfort of seeing him ; and his priests and people—what must *they* feel ? To regard it as an individual sorrow would not be right ; our portion of it may well be lost in the lamentations of his poor, orphaned people.

“ Yet I can account for my poor Sister’s feeling so much on this distressing occasion. The good bishop afforded

her the chief comfort she felt on parting with me ; still, I know she will not continue unmindful of the exalted obligations of our holy state, and I will confide in the generous bounty and never-failing kindness of our all-merciful Saviour (to which, however, we must put no impediment) that He will pour down on you all, my dear Sisters, His sweet, abundant consolations, and that I shall find you in a few days perfectly tranquil and *reasonably* cheerful.

“With most fervent prayers for my tender, ardent Sister M. Frances, and for all, I remain most sincerely, your attached mother in Christ,

“ MARY CATHERINE McAULEY.

“ ST. MARY’S, CORK, Feast of St. Teresa, Oct. 15, 1837.”

The mother-superior of the Carlow convent was at that time about twenty-seven years of age. The excess of grief to which she gave way wholly unfitted her for her duties, and in this dreadful bereavement she claimed of Mother McAuley the fulfilment of a promise which had been her consolation in the painful parting six months previous. “What shall I do if we be misunderstood, or maligned, or have troubles like our poor Sisters in Kingstown ?” she said when charged with the establishment of the Carlow convent. “I will come to you, my darling,” was the reply, before which all doubts and difficulties vanished. Reverend mother was now obliged to explain, what should have been obvious enough, that her promise did not include such trials as death occasions. In herself excesses of every kind were subdued under the dominion of grace, and she disapproved of the immoderate grief in which her young favorite indulged, while she endeavored to excuse it.

The whole letter evinces extraordinary nobility of mind and a high degree of the beautiful unselfishness which was always prominent in her character. Not a word of her own sorrow does she obtrude upon her youthful Sisters ; and yet, perhaps, Dr. Nolan was the only man who ever thoroughly understood her at first sight and who took in at a glance the whole scope of her Institute. He was proud

to be regarded by her as a father, a brother, a friend, who would never complain unless she used himself and his influence too sparingly. When it is remembered that her Rules were not yet confirmed, and that her own bishop at this period deemed it his duty to take anything but what seemed a fatherly part towards herself personally and her Institute, her grief and resignation will be better appreciated.

The warm attachments that sometimes take place between religious—"convent idolatries," as one of the initiated has called them—are said to have a weakening influence on the characters of those who yield to them. But nothing of this kind resulted from the attachment between the foundress and her children. She was one of those holy, high-minded women who have the faculty of inspiring other women, and even men, with their own lofty enthusiasm; and the friendship of such persons has never an enfeebling effect, but rather lifts its objects above the meannesses and littlenesses of poor, unaided nature, and shares with them its own ardor and simplicity. Mother McAuley, in the direction of her children, showed no less strength than tenderness, and pointed out to all a practical way to perfection, open to no illusion: duty, the duty of the hour, must be done, and well done, under all circumstances; and crosses, no matter how great, must be received with cordial acquiescence in the divine will, which fashions and sends them. Hence she could not quite approve of the anguish to which Mother Frances yielded; she, who was accustomed to meet the cross at every turn, never allowed death or any other affliction, however grave, to interfere with the discharge of present duty. But the strong are more merciful than the weak, and she gives her bereaved children at Carlow a few days "to become perfectly tranquil and *reasonably* cheerful."

The "tender, ardent, affectionate Sister M. Frances" followed the advice of her good mother and sought refuge

in humble resignation to the holy will of God, "whom we must love as well when He takes as when He gives." The foundress and her companion visited St. Leo's on their way from Cork, and found the Sisters, if not "perfectly tranquil," at least "reasonably cheerful." On reaching Dublin she wrote a few lines to Mother Josephine Warde, then mother-assistant in the Cork convent, who felt much anxiety as to the effect the lamented bishop's death might have on her younger Sister :

"MY DEAREST SISTER MARY JOSEPHINE : Accept these few lines, which proceed from my heart, earnestly hoping you are as well and happy as I wish you to be. We found dear Sister M. Frances much more reconciled to her great affliction than I expected. Rev. Francis Haly—who is expected to succeed the beloved Dr. Nolan—was the most particular friend of your uncle, William Maher, and has been quite affectionate to our Sisters in Carlow. Mary Maher, who entered in Maryborough, is likely to join Sister M. Frances, which was her first vocation. Remember me most affectionately to my dear Sisters Mary Anastasia, Aloysius, and Catherine, each of whom, I trust, is happy. Pray fervently for me, and believe me most affectionately, etc., etc.,

MARY C. McAULEY."

The first death which occurred outside Dublin took place in Carlow, and Rev. Dr. Maher, having announced it to the foundress, received the following from her by return of post :

"I have received your kind letter, dear sir, and am exceedingly concerned at the melancholy communication. Thank God the event has been attended with such consoling circumstances ! It must be a severe trial to her relations ; to my dear Sisters I know it is a real portion of the cross, and as such I trust they will embrace it as the holy will of God with humble resignation. I have great happiness in knowing that they will receive from you, my dear sir, all the solid counsel and animating comfort which affectionate fatherly feelings can dictate. The most sen-

sible participation of the trial has already spread through the house [St. Mary's], and all unite in earnest prayer for our poor Sister."

By the same post she wrote to the superioress :

" How deeply, how sincerely I participate in this second trial with which God has seen fit to afflict you ! Rest assured He will soon send you some distinguished consolation. The reward always comes after a well-received cross."

But it was not always easy even for the buoyant spirit of her correspondent to recover its cheerfulness on these sad occasions, and another consoling letter follows :

" You have given all to God, without any reserve. Nothing can happen to you which He does not appoint. You desire nothing but the accomplishment of His will. Everything, however trivial, comes from that adorable source. You must be cheerful, animating all around you. You may be sure we all fervently pray for you; that is the best thing we can do. If you had seen the general feeling that prevailed at recreation last night you might have thought that we were strangers to such sorrows."

And when a change of confessor, and still more the means by which it was brought about, afflicted her " tender, ardent Sister," she receives her confidence with her usual motherly tenderness, and then endeavors to heal the wound with the strong and sweet doctrine wherewith she was wont to regale her children in their hours of trial and depression :

" It distressed me much to hear that your good director was changed. I know it is an affliction for you, but rest assured God will soon send you some distinguished consolation. This is your life—joys and sorrows mingled, one succeeding the other. Let us not think of the means God has employed to send us some portions of His holy cross, ever mindful that it comes from Himself."

## CHAPTER XX.

### CARLOW FOUNDATION, CONTINUED.

Reverend Mother's Letters to Carlow—Friend after Friend departs—Very Rev. Dr. Coleman—Dean Meyler—The Chaplaincy Difficulties—Kindness and Sympathy of the Carlow Clergy—Letters—Holy Innocents—Wit and Humor—Affectionate Letter of Dr. Fitzgerald—He notices the failing Health of the Foundress—He begs her, but fruitlessly, to give some little repose to a mind and body for ever under pressure.

THE delicacy and playfulness of reverend mother's disposition, the depth of her feelings and the warmth of her heart, her bright, exuberant fancy, and her loyalty to her friends appear more prominently in her letters to Carlow than in any other correspondence we have seen from her pen. She wrote to the bishop and priests with a charming unreserve, in which heart spoke to heart, making them partakers in her joys and trials, the disappointments, defeats, losses, and triumphs which vary the history of her own guileless, magnanimous spirit and of her cherished Institute. The good mother appreciated their sympathy the more as she knew well what it was to rest upon a staff that bent, and even broke, under the pressure, "and pierced the hand that leaned upon it." Friends upon whom she had relied had often proved a hindrance rather than a help; and it was almost always the economy of God's providence in her regard to remove by death or inevitable separation those who evinced peculiar interest in her and hers. Thus, Rev. Dr. Armstrong died in the beginning of what may be regarded as her public career, and Dr. Blake, who, as vicar-general, served and obliged her in every possible way, was

elevated to the see of Dromore in 1833. Troubles began under his successor, Dean Meyler, which ended only a little before her life. And in a letter to Carlow she announces the death of one of the very few priests who would venture openly to disagree with the dean in the severe measures which he adopted towards her :

“I have just heard of Very Rev. Dr. Coleman’s death; and, indeed, I have reason to be heartily sorry. Bishop Blake having mentioned to him how much I was afflicted with regard to the arrangements making as to the chaplaincy, though he was exceedingly weak and the weather most severe, he came here several times, went to Dr. Meyler, and used all the means in his power to have it as we wished. When he could not succeed he wrote me such a kind, fatherly note ! I can never forget his great tenderness and Christian manner of acting. He desired that we should regard him as a particular friend, and immediately he is called away. His death was quite sudden. May God receive him into the glory of heaven ! ”

The coldness which Mother McAuley sometimes experienced from Archbishop Murray was in striking contrast to the zeal that holy prelate showed in advancing the interests confided to other foundresses. From 1834 to 1839 her congregation passed through a fiery ordeal. There are trials from which the holiest shrink, which wound them to the heart’s core, because they seem to imperil the existence of what they have begun for God’s glory and what heretofore bore the stamp of His approval. It is not yet time to speak fully of the sorrows of this period of the life of the holy mother ; suffice it to say that soon after the promotion of Dr. Blake to the see of Dromore his successor in the vicar-generalship, Very Rev. Walter Meyler, deemed it his duty to act a part that seemed most unfriendly to herself personally and to her young and struggling Institute. He withdrew the chaplain, Rev. Daniel Burke, O.S.F.—who had ministered to their spiritual wants in that capacity for

*Carlow Foundation, Continued.*

eight years, giving them one Mass daily and two M... on Sundays and holidays—and refused to replace him except on terms to which she could not in conscience agree. This arbitrary proceeding resulted in inconveniences of many kinds.

It was in itself an annoyance to feel that privileges allowed, and even freely offered, when the foundress and her associates were simply devout secular ladies, should be withheld when they formed a recognized religious body. Besides, the nearest chapel, Westland Row, was so distant that Mother McAuley was obliged to hire vehicles for the sickly Sisters ; and as it was usually nine o'clock or later when all returned, the breakfast, served separately to the different grades, was scarcely out of sight at ten—an hour at which a good deal of the conventual day's work is supposed to be over. The inconveniences were still greater on days of obligation, when the orphans, the young women of the House of Mercy, etc., had to be got ready for Mass.

All this, coupled with the disastrous state of affairs in Kingstown, the annoyance expressed by the世俗s excluded from the convent chapel, etc., combined to make this a period of extraordinary anxiety for the holy mother. A single word from the archbishop would have rectified matters, but the cautious prelate declined to interfere. "We go to Westland Row every morning," she writes. "I carry my child in its cradle [her broken arm in a sling]. Twelve couples start as gaily as we did when travelling to Clarendon Street in our first happy days. I wrote to Dr. Blake, stating our grievances, and will act according to his advice. You know how difficult it is to get the poor women and children out and home again on days of obligation, and their confessions are, of course, neglected. The archbishop does not interfere. He permitted Dr. Blake, when vicar-general, to give us a chaplain and two Masses ; now he allows another in the same authority to act as he

pleases. All is fair and right, and will end well, if God be not offended."

And again : " We have now, indeed, more than an ordinary portion of the cross, but is it not the ' cross of Christ ' which we so often pray may be constantly about us? It has not any of the marks of an angry cross. There is no disunion, no gloomy depression of spirits, no departure from charity resulting from it. The difficulties lessen every day ; we get our poor inmates out to confession by six at a time. . . . We get an occasional charitable Mass. I am sure Dr. Meyler would wish the matter settled according to his own plan. We should then have at least three priests, and never know whom to call on as friend or chaplain. . . . When I have the happiness of seeing Dr. Fitzgerald I will tell him, and him only, another strong reason why the proposed connection should, if possible, be avoided. I am not unhappy, thank God ! nor do I see any disedification likely to result from the matter. Some think that, after having had Father Burke for eight years, we are not now easily pleased ; and most of those who know the cause why we go out seem to think we ought to have a distinct chaplain, and only say that Dr. Meyler is a little positive. This is the extent of it at present. It is humiliating, no doubt, a smart attack on self-importance, and, if this part of it be well managed, it must turn to good account."

It was during this time of trial more than ever that the hearts of the Carlow clergy went out towards her in sympathy, and their heads devised many ways of aiding her. Dr. Fitzgerald, venerable for his years, virtues, and learning ; Dr. Maher, selected for the vicar-generalship of his native diocese, in the early days of his ministry, by Dr. Doyle himself ; Father Dan Nolan, brother to the recently deceased prelate—all used their influence, and, as in the case of Dr. Coleman, she was not the less grateful because their efforts to serve her were fruitless. " The kind interest

Father Maher manifested," she writes, "was most consoling because genuine ; indeed, I could speak to him with all the confidence of a well-tried friend, and such does not often fall to my lot." And again : "Remember me with respect and affection to my dear friend Dr. Fitzgerald, who has taken such a kind, feeling part in our troubles.\* Tell him *all will end well*. Remember me most gratefully to the other good clergymen from whom we experienced such attention and kindness. To Father Maher you could not omit to offer my grateful acknowledgments. God has given you a good father in him."

Dear old Doctor Fitzgerald thought nothing of coming up to Dublin to console "the second St. Brigid," and while he was in town St. Mary's did not need a chaplain. "He acted like a true friend," she writes ; "and though in public and private he exclaimed against what he thought unjust and unkind, yet he reasoned with me so as to produce calm and quiet of mind." Father Nolan, whom, from a fancied resemblance to her deceased niece, Mary Teresa, she was accustomed to call her adopted son, spent the Christmas holidays in Dublin, 1837-1838, that he might celebrate Mass in her chapel these severe mornings. We will give a pleasant letter addressed to Carlow on Holy Innocents', December 28, 1837. This is a sort of free day in many convents, on which the inmates amuse themselves by wishing each other a happy feast and investing the youngest with mock authority as a sort of abbess of misrule ; and the foundress seems to have imbibed no small share of the general hilarity :

"**MY DEAR SISTER M. FRANCES :** It is no wonder I should like my adopted son, for he is a real rogue, accord-

\* Towards the end of 1838 something very grievous seems to have occurred on the part of the diocesan authorities to aggravate our holy mother's difficulties.

"Pray for me," she wrote, "that God may remove all bitterness far from me. I can hardly think without resentment of what has been done to me. May God forgive me and make me truly humble before He calls me into His presence."

ing to my own taste. The franks \* for which we sent came while he was here. I said I had nothing to say in yours, and he proposed that I should write hinting, or in part saying, that he was likely to remain chaplain here, and that I should endeavor gradually to reconcile you to this. Though all was ready—artfully done so as not to tell an untruth—I found I could not send it, lest it might give you a passing motion of uneasiness. *Play your part well*, however. *My son* will appear quite embarrassed. Be surprised that I should think of taking any more comfort from you, etc., etc., and when you have him well cheated discover the plot.

“I was heartily delighted to see him. He is like my Mary Teresa, and certainly as innocent.”

There may be found in these pages letters more powerfully written, but none which show in a more amiable light the texture of the writer’s mind, her sensitive and affectionate nature, and the considerateness for others which formed so marked a feature in her beautiful character. Mother McAuley was able to enter into the spirit of a joke as fully as the youngest of her children, but she was quite powerless to carry it out if it were capable of causing to the object of it a passing motion of uneasiness.

Very Rev. James Maher spent the early days of the new year (1838) in Dublin; but though he used his utmost endeavors, by way of mediation, to have the chaplaincy arranged satisfactorily, he found the vicar-general inflexible. During his stay he officiated daily in Baggot Street, but was summoned home January 9 so suddenly that he was unable to call before leaving. The same day the foundress addressed him the following witty note:

“MY DEAR FATHER MAHER: I am sorry you did not complete the full week’s attendance which, according to the statutes now most rigorously observed in this diocese, would have entitled you to a pound or a guinea, whichever you preferred. I really cannot say, without making in-

\* *Franks.*—This was before the introduction of the penny postage system.

quiry, whether a broken week be payable or not. You will excuse me for taking this little advantage of you, for you know although I should be simple as a dove, I must also be wise as a serpent ; and since there is little good to be accomplished or evil to be avoided without the aid of money, we must look after it in small matters as well as in great.

“ I have now to deplore the loss of a *superfine* veal cutlet, specially provided for this morning. A dear, nice little tea-kettle was ready to supply boiling water to the third or fourth cup, as might be required, and my poor, infirm hand employed far beyond its strength in making the fire burn brilliantly, giving a sharp edge to the knife, toasting a plate, etc., etc.

“ Most sincerely thanking you for past services, and begging a continuance of the same,

“ I remain, dear sir, your ever-faithful

“ M. C. McAULEY.

“ P.S. Don’t forfeit all chance of the pound ; perhaps you can make up the week without violating the law.”

From this pleasant letter it is clear that years and sorrows dealt as gently with the bright mind of the foundress as with her fair person. It is hard to think of her as no longer young, for her mental faculties, mellowed by time, remained brilliant and acute to the last, and she gained the glory of years without losing the charm of youth.

Dr. Fitzgerald was one of the first to observe that labors and troubles were beginning to break down her naturally fine constitution, and he urged upon her—alas ! without success—the imperative necessity of giving some rest to a mind and body for ever under pressure. In a letter dated Carlow College, August 4, 1840, he speaks of the great things God had wrought by her humble instrumentality, and facetiously reminds her that she carries the treasures of God in a fragile vessel often requiring repairs, some of which he invites her to make in Carlow. It is remarkably well written and composed for a man of his years :

“ MY DEAR FRIEND : I do not think my holy patron, St.

Dominic, ever received more sincere devotional feelings from me, his unworthy son, than I offered him this day. You are not aware that you contributed to excite this warmth of devotion; yet so it is. The dear Sisters of Mercy attended my Mass and partook with me of the Bread of Life. Could my heart be cold in such company? And was it not you who, assisted by the Holy Spirit, formed that company and gave them to us to dispense and obtain MERCY? Truly I may say that God took you out of darkness to spread His light; and you are spreading it under His vocation in humility of heart, knowing that of yourself you are nothing, but all things in Him that strengthens you.

“It is delightful to reflect on the success of your late mission. England, as in former times, sends her virgins amongst us\* to see how Ireland has learned from long suffering to be compassionate towards human misery, and God has made you an agent for these purposes. See the ‘big house,’† the object of which could not be divined by the wise ones of this world, and which even you could not distinctly foresee. Now what a teeming mother you are! Your children, reared under one roof, proclaiming in distant quarters the mercies of God to His people! How humbled you should be to think that, with all the infirmities that accompany you, you have been selected to diffuse His bounty to His suffering children! Now, my dear friend, glory in these infirmities, that the power of Christ may be perfected in you.

“But you must sometimes think that you carry the treasures of God in a fragile vessel liable to break and chink, and requiring frequent repairs, to effect which you cannot have leisure amid the various intrusions of those immediately about you. Break from them and come down to the calm, quiet residence of your children here. A few days with us will renovate mind and body, and send you home fresh for new toils. Remember God has given you charge of the health you employ in his service. Come to us, and we shall send you back laden with that blessing. Mind, I hate that cough that annoys you, and here we

\* The above refers to the convent just founded in London by Mother McAuley, and to the number of English ladies who came to join the Order in Ireland.

† Baggot Street House, when in course of erection, used to be nicknamed “the big house,” “the folly,” etc.

have a certain cure for it. Now, my dearest old friend, in unison with all here I earnestly beg of you to have compassion on yourself and on the many interested in you, and to come down here as soon as possible.

“Though almost blind, I cannot give up scribbling to you as long as the sheet permits. I will conclude by earnestly repeating your obligation of coming down to our good air.

“With all the affection of my old heart, I am, dearest friend, your devoted brother in Christ,

“ANDREW FITZGERALD, O.P.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

### PROGRESS IN CARLOW.

Father Spencer eulogizes the Zeal of the Carlow Nuns—The new Convent near the Carlow Cathedral—Sacred Associations—Visitors—The mild Air of Carlow—Getting too fond of Carlow—The new Bishop—Dr. Nolan's proffered Annuity not claimed—Consoling Visit to Carlow—Letter—Branches—Ghosts—Interesting Reminiscences—A Hole in a Stocking—Impressions of a bright Girl—Of the same forty Years later—Mother McAuley visits the Cullen Family—Two Vocations to her Institute the Result—Last Days of Father Maher.

NOT only the distinctive works of the Institute but good deeds of every species found ardent co-operators \* among the Carlow Sisterhood. An instance of this may be found in a letter of Father Ignatius Spencer to Mrs. Louisa Canning, quoted in his *Life*:

“I got fully into the pursuit of prayers for England again. I hardly expected anything could be done in this way under the excited state of feelings in Ireland against England. I began, however, speaking in the convent [of Mercy] in Carlow, and so warm and beautiful was the way in which these nuns took it up that I lost no occasion of saying Mass in some convent every morning, and preaching to them upon it ; and the zeal which they showed has given me a new spring to push it on to England.”

An edifying but clumsy paragraph, which does more honor to the devotion and zeal of the holy Passionist

\* Several years ago Rev. John Schneider, C.S.S.R., used to delight and edify the New Orleans Sisterhood by relating to them, especially during a retreat which he conducted for them, many touching instances of the zeal and sanctity of their Sisters in Carlow and their willingness to help in every possible way whatever good work they happened to hear of.

than to his university education. But, by God's grace, he did his appointed work better than more polished scholars might have done it.

The building of a new convent in Carlow greatly interested the venerated foundress, as it was the first house planned and built for a Convent of Mercy. "The passengers on the stage-coaches are bringing descriptions of the new convent," she writes to Mother Frances. "I hear of it constantly. Father Carroll is proclaiming it as the handsomest in Ireland." It was a disappointment to her that she was unable to be present at the blessing—the Limerick foundation coming in the way—and she writes: "I need not pity you and myself for our mutual disappointment, but, please God, on my return I will avail myself of the permission I got, and if I cannot see the convent-blessing I hope to see it *blest*, which is as good." And again: "It is gratifying to hear you are to have the comfort of entering your new convent in May ['38]. You will be making a fervent preparation for that happy event, and draw down upon yourselves the blessings of Heaven by *observing all the regulations, and by a cautious, salutary fear of every departure from rule and observance*. Then will God make your house His own and love to dwell among you."

At this time Carlow cathedral was the finest ecclesiastical monument in Ireland—a marvel of architectural beauty in the eyes of all, but no less than a miracle of genius, enterprise, and bewildering splendor to the thousands who vividly remembered the thatched cabins, the bleak hillside, the lonely groves in which the sacred mysteries had been stealthily celebrated for centuries. It was a source of gratification to Mother McAuley that the modest, elegant convent erected for her children was not entirely unworthy of companionship with that noble structure, at once the monument and the tomb of her illustrious friend Dr. Doyle. While both edifices owed some of their celebrity to the

comparison they suggested with their squalid predecessors, yet each had a glory which their grander successors have not. Who would not fall under the spell of holy and patriotic associations in a mere barn sanctified by the life and illumined by the lofty genius of "J. K. L." rather than amid soaring Gothic arches and fretted aisles unhallowed by such associations? And thus the neat, handsome Carlow convent, which occupies now so modest a position compared with the noble piles since erected in various parts of the country—structures which rival the early ecclesiastical glories, in whose ruins we can study to-day the most touching page of Irish history—boasts a blessing which they never had. Its humble corridors and pleasant rooms were once trodden by her feet and sanctified by her presence; and in its sweet, old-fashioned garden are the soaring poplars and the glossy evergreens which she loved; the mound, crowned with roses, which gave her such unfeigned delight; the splendid stock gillyflowers, in flaunting colors, which brightened the whole; and the trim walks which she paced with her "dairling Fanny Warde" and the cherished children of her "first flock."\*

A visit to Carlow seems to have been a delightful recreation to Mother McAuley, and Dr. Fitzgerald and Father Maher sought to consolidate the community in which they took so deep an interest by inducing her to come as often as possible. The climate was considered exceptionally mild, and Mother McAuley brought thither now and then as companion some valuable member whose health, broken by incessant labors, seemed in danger, or some Sister to

\* Sister M. de Sales Maher was organist, and had charge of the garden from 1837 till her holy death, September, 1873. She is described as a thorough Sister of Mercy, remarkable for her zeal for the salvation of men and her love of music and flowers. To raise flowers for the altar was her dearest recreation, and she took an innocent pride in some fine varieties her garden yielded, the most showy of which were the double-stock gillies which she believed to be unequalled. "It gave her pleasure to the last," writes one of the Sisters, "to hear us praise her flowers, which we were very careful to do when we showed her the bouquets we culled for the chapel every morning."

aid the young community, or some fine musician to help at a ceremony ; in this way Carlow convent saw all the earlier members. The first band of English subjects sojourned in Car'ow. "The most angelic Sister M. Aloysiūs Scott" regained there the health she had lost in such close application to duty as "alarmed" the foundress. The declining health of Sisters M. Ursula Frayne, Teresa White, and Juliana Hardman—all still (1881) active members—is duly chronicled, with cures of the same supposed to be effected by the mild air of Carlow. At last Mother McAuley, in reply to a general invitation extended to the ailing members by Mother Frances, announced that the Sisters of St. Mary's "must live and die between Baggot Street, Bootertown, and Kingstown, as no Sister can go to Carlow who is not to remain ; they all get too fond of it." She adds that Sister M. Elizabeth Moore was delighted with the new convent, and "thinks it quite irresistible" in the matter of attracting postulants—which, indeed, it proved to be.

Although the Carlow community, like every other established by the mother-foundress, grew and waxed strong beneath the blessed shadow of the cross, it was nevertheless a wonderful success. Mother McAuley speaks of a visit just made her by the successor of her venerated friend Dr. Nolan, who, it was feared, but groundlessly, did not inherit the intense affection of his predecessor for her Institute. "I could not describe the extreme kindness of Dr. Haly," she writes. "He was afraid I might be uneasy lest some little arrangements he made might cause you any uneasiness, and he gave the most full, and unquestionably faithful, assurance of deepest interest and regard. You have a true father in him." In a letter to Limerick she mentions the ravages of a storm that did much injury throughout the country in January, 1839 : "The Sisters in Carlow passed the night in the choir ; part of their very old roof blown down ; the beautiful cathedral much injured."

Even in a pecuniary way St. Leo's prospered. The annuity promised by Bishop Nolan, and of which he insisted on giving them the first instalment—fifty pounds—on their arrival, was never claimed. Mother McAuley, who could not bear the suspicion of an avaricious spirit in religious, desired the Sisters not to accept this gift for themselves, unless they really needed it; nor would she, from a feeling that will be readily understood, allow Bishop Haly to be informed of Dr. Nolan's promise.

Mother McAuley visited Carlow in November, 1840, and upon her return wrote to Mother Frances a letter which must have been most consoling to her: "The first prayer I offered on my arrival was to return most grateful thanks to God for the sweet, heavenly consolation I received in my visit to Carlow, and to implore His blessing and gracious protection for those who have been so instrumental in bringing that branch to its present flourishing and happy state."

The zeal and enterprise—if such a word may be here applied—on which the holy foundress congratulated the Carlow community have never diminished. It has branched out to Naas (1839), which will be more fully described elsewhere; to Westport (1842), a beautiful town in Mayo of some four thousand inhabitants; to Cheadle (1845) and Bilston (1849), England; and Gort (1857) and Callan (1870). And it has had the exceptional honor of planting the Order on the American continent and in the Islands of New Zealand.

From Carlow the Sisters spread also to Tuam (1846), where they occupy a property once in possession of a most anti-Catholic family, so that it was regarded as marvellous that it ever should have come to the Sisters' share. It was not, however, easily rented or sold, as it enjoyed the reputation of being haunted by the ghosts of the priest-hunters whose headquarters it had been in penal times.

The following reminiscences, written by a niece of Mo-

ther McAuley's friend, Father Maher, will prove very interesting :

"On the 6th of June, 1839, I entered the Carlow Convent of Mercy. Towards the end of August our amiable foundress paid us a visit on her way from Cork, whither she had gone to assist at the profession of Miss A—— and Miss T——, who were destined for a foundation at Bermondsey, London. The newly-professed began their journey the day after their profession, and paid short visits to our convents in Limerick, Charleville, and Tullamore. They spent five days with us. Mother Clare Moore, superior of the convent in Cork, and Sister Mary de Sales Whyte accompanied them, as did also Very Rev. Dr. O'Rafferty, of Tullamore.\*

"The venerated Mother McAuley seemed greatly pleased at the accession of many valuable novices and postulants to our community. The impression made on us young people by the unexpected visit of our graver Sisters was a fear that we should be under some wonderful restraint while they were with us, as we had got a vigorous lecture to act religiously, politely, and affectionately, etc. After a few hours, however, we liked our new acquaintances very well. Mother Clare had a strikingly meek look and manner. Sister Mary de Sales was very pretty and lively, anxious to help us to recreate gaily. The other Sisters were not young, but ladylike ; still, we [the novices and postulants] thought them eccentric in their attitudes at prayer.

\* It will probably have struck the reader that Mother McAuley's journeyings bore much resemblance to those of St. Teresa. Her party was usually accompanied by one or more priests, sometimes by a bishop. As far as possible they followed on the journey the convent routine, and, their spiritual exercises being over, sweet and pleasant conversation consoled and animated the travellers and shortened the road. They heard Mass and received Holy Communion as regularly as when in their convent home ; and bright skies and fair landscapes served to raise their hearts to Him who has planned and formed so much beauty to gladden His children in their earthly prison. The holy foundress was a delightful companion at home or abroad ; peace and heavenly gladness ever and always irradiated her beautiful soul and cheered and comforted her cherished companions.

We excused ourselves for so thinking by saying they were English converts.\* In after-years they proved to be eccentric indeed. Reverend Mother McAuley was liked by all here, except one postulant in whose stocking she had observed a hole on a previous visit.

“Our revered foundress was up at the first call every morning and joined in all our exercises, taking the place usually occupied by the mother-assistant. She spent much of her time conferring with the professed Sisters: a foundation to Naas was in contemplation, and I suppose she had many matters to discuss relative to it.

“I think what pleased or took our fancy most in Reverend Mother McAuley was the absence of a manner telling, ‘I am the foundress.’ She was very cheerful and motherly with all of us, and looked very devout at her prayers. The morning of her departure she asked Mother Frances if she might take two or three twists of bread off the refectory table, as she and her companions would be six hours on the road. The old stage-coach was the quickest mode of conveyance, and by it they travelled. Her request for the bread was not made in any ostentatious manner, but with a natural sincerity that seemed to say it was quite good enough. Mother Frances offered to have a luncheon prepared, but it was declined.

“In November, 1840, reverend mother came to take home Sister M. Aloysius Scott. Her travelling companion was Sister M. Justina Hardman, then wearing the white veil

\* The penetration shown by our *naïve* postulant of sixteen and her young companions is very remarkable in the light of subsequent events. The “English convert” Sisters who began with Sister M. Gertrude Jones in 1830 were, as a rule, among the best subjects ever professed in the Institute. The two above alluded, both of whom were past forty when admitted, though most estimable in many ways, were ultimately found unsuited to the Order. They came to be so given to extraordinary ways that it was judged advisable, after Mother McAuley’s death, to sever their connection with the Institute, which was the more easily done as they had entered before the Confirmation of the Rules, etc. It is curious that, with all her penetration, it took Mother McAuley many months to discover what became so obvious to the juniors of the Carlow novitiate in a few days’ visit, though none of the seniors seem to have perceived the “eccentricity.”

and destined for the Birmingham foundation. We saw with regret that the health of our venerable foundress was breaking greatly, and that she took but little care of herself. The pension-school being open, she gave instructions in it. She also brought a present of four veils for the four professed Sisters. They were of nun's crape, which was thus substituted for the gossamer previously worn. She remarked that the gossamer was too like a bit of millinery."

Such were the impressions of a frank, bright girl of sixteen. Let us see what the same has to say forty-two years later :

" My present feeling is that our foundress was a great saint and had labored hard to bring into subjection every feeling contrary to perfection. There was in her exterior, voice included, a tender sweetness blended with a tinge of mournfulness. I cannot describe this, but there are strains in music that make one very thoughtful, though not the least gloomy."

" So it was with her. You were made happy in her company, while at the same time her conversation left matter that made you serious and desirous of imbibing her spirit."

Before leaving for Dublin, in September, 1839, Mother McAuley went to Craan to visit Mr. Gerald Cullen, who, being very ill, wished to see her, and she would not omit anything that could please or gratify a family that had done so much for religion. She was accompanied by Mr. Cullen's two daughters, then in the novitiate. One of these ladies died mother-superior of the Pittsburgh Convent of Mercy; the other is at present mother-superior of the Westport convent. Among other things Mother McAuley said to Mr. Cullen : " It ought to be a great comfort to you, my dear friend, to know that your daughters are desirous of devoting themselves to the service of God in a convent. Were they wedded to an earthly prince the honor would be but a passing one, but the glory and honor of being consecrated to the King of kings will endure for ever."

Even on this occasion Mother McAuley, according to her own apt metaphor, unconsciously acted the recruiting officer: two more daughters of the house of Cullen, coveting the honor which she so eloquently described, followed their elder sisters to the Carlow novitiate.

Very Rev. Dr. James Maher, parish priest of Graigue, survived the holy foundress thirty-six years. During his last illness the mother-superior of St. Leo's, who happened to be his niece, and the other Sisters in turn, were constantly with him. Like most aged persons, he frequently glanced back at the happy hours gone by, and he seemed to rest with peculiar complacency on his acquaintance with that bright and beautiful spirit so long the object of his reverential affection. On the last day of his life he frequently remarked to the attending Sisters: "Your foundress was a saint, and a great saint. The Blessed Virgin loves you all, for are you not her own dear children?"

The dear Sister to whom we owe several of these particulars of one of the stanchest friends of the holy foundress writes:

"Poor old Father Maher was a most devoted friend of our Institute from its early days. He took great pains to befriend and consolidate it in every possible way. He inculcated great charity and compassion for the destitute, the ignorant, the afflicted, and, above all, for poor sinners; and he was very earnest in grounding his spiritual daughters in humility, both by precept and example. He used to often say: 'We are all full of infirmities, and yet our good God condescends to make use of us for the promotion of His greater glory.' "

Mother McAuley frequently expressed her heartfelt gratitude to God for giving her dear children in Carlow so holy and enlightened a spiritual director as Very Rev. James Maher.

Our dear Carlow correspondent continues:

"Another Sister and I were with him when he expired,

Holy Thursday morning (1877), at two o'clock, in the quiet of his poor room. . . . I heard him tell more than once that our venerated Mother McAuley used to say, 'The visitation of the sick is a fine corrective, if ever Sisters get out of tune about imaginary troubles.' The dear old man had the highest idea of the holiness of our venerable mother. During the last months of his illness especially he often spoke of her as a saint."

The testimony of the ascetic Father Maher is peculiarly important, as he was Mother McAuley's intimate friend for many years and occasionally her confessor. He was, besides, ecclesiastical superior, and consequently both had much business to transact together; indeed, it was to him that she recurred for advice and direction in some of the most critical periods and greatest trials of her life. He had, therefore, ample opportunities of learning thoroughly the character and spirit of a woman whom he loved to describe as "a saint, and a great saint."

Dr. Fitzgerald survived "his dearest old friend" nearly two years, dying in September, 1843, just one month before the first colony left Carlow for Pittsburgh with Bishop O'Connor. His successors have inherited his love for the Institute. In short, as the late mother-superior of Carlow convent gratefully writes: "The college clergy have given us every spiritual aid in their power since St. Leo's was founded." It was a great consolation to the Sisters to be able to visit the venerable president daily and soothe the last hours of one to whom they owed so much. "Father Andrew's illness," wrote one of the Sisters thirty-eight years later, "and our daily visits to him as the end of his holy life approached, occupied more of our conversation than the foreign mission, which we regarded as something in the distant perspective."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE CORK FOUNDATION.

Cork—Its Fidelity to the Catholic Religion—St. Marie's of the Isle—The old Cathedral—Cork in 1837—The old Chapels—Old Convents of Cork—Mother Aloysia Moylan almost a Centenarian—The Cradle of restored Monasticism—The first Sisters of the Sacred Heart—The Protestant Bishop “to his beloved Daughter, Margaret Fitzgerald”—Bishop Murphy—An Enthusiast about Books—Mother Clare Moore—Arrival in Cork—Sisters who formed the Foundation of this House—Early Friends—Rev. W. O'Connor.

WHEN reverend mother returned from her second visit to Carlow, in June, 1837, she found it necessary to prepare at once for the Cork foundation. Her niece, Catherine, was in a dying condition, and sad indeed were her feelings at the prospect of leaving, perhaps to see her face no more, one so dear. But such was her devotion to duty that nothing could deter her when once it became clear that God required her to act.

Under different circumstances a visit to the gay southern capital would doubtless have been pleasant to her Catholic heart. For Cork was known as a delightful city, singular in its loyalty to the holy Church. From the early days of the Reformation every invention, human and diabolical, was used to wean its citizens from Rome; but so intractable did they prove that their boldness was stigmatized as “brazeness” by the magnates of the dominant “persuasion,” who were amazed to see them open “Mass-houses” where they pleased, and pour by hundreds into the wide doors of these wondrous architectural barns every Sunday and holiday.

In the reign of James I. the Mayor of Cork, Sarsfield—a name destined to reappear gloriously before the close of the century—was fined an enormous sum, representing perhaps twelve hundred pounds of to-day's currency, for going to Mass. Strafford, that bane of “three kingdoms,” plundered the citizens in the next reign, but could not convert them. During the great rebellion they naturally joined the confederates, and their patriotism was punished by all the disasters that follow in the train of a lost cause. Cromwell, the Terrible, chose to spend his Christmas in Cork in 1649—not as a messenger of peace and good-will, however; for being in want of ordnance, he tore the church-bells\* from their belfries, and amused himself in planning the atrocities by which he hoped to sweep the Celts and their cherished faith for ever from the land. During the long and lazy reign of the merry monarch—a prince whose mother, wife, sister, brother, and heir were Catholics—nothing was done to make things merry for “ye papists of Corcke,” to whom the full rigor of the penal laws continued to be vigorously applied.

When James II. came to Cork in March, 1689, he was received with military honors; his fleet anchored in the harbor, and his French allies were quartered about the town. It was in the Dominican priory, St. Marie's of the Isle, that he took up his abode, and the natives were charmed on the following Sunday to see their old king and his regal escort wending their way to the North Abbey, where they assisted at a solemn Mass with a devotion that edified the beholders. Poor King James seldom brought good luck to his friends. William's fleet soon replaced the ships of his unfortunate uncle, and Churchill summoned

\* A sacrilegious feat that did not edify his fanatical followers, and in connection with which one of the few *maxims* recorded of the awful “Protector” has come down to us—a grim enough joke or pun. When they remonstrated with him for turning into siege-guns these adjuncts of the temples of God, he is said to have replied :

“Since gunpowder was invented by a monk, surely it is not wrong to promote church bells into *canons*.”

the loyal people to surrender; the friars had to flee from their stately abode, and "the Isle" became successively the seat of the governor of Cork and the town mansion of Lord Inchiquin. On this classic spot, so full of holy and historic associations, stands to-day the noble Gothic pile known as the Cork Convent of Mercy, St. Marie's of the Isle.

Within a few yards of St. Marie's of the Isle is a Doric building, the Protestant cathedral, erected on the site of the ancient cathedral of St. Finbar,\* which was ruined in the siege of 1690. Every spot in this quarter of Cork is hallowed by poetic and holy associations. But the ancient churchyard, shaded by venerable trees and filled with the greenest of graves, looks bleak and desolate to the Catholic eye on the brightest days.

As to religious liberty, Cork was at its worst after the "Violated Treaty," but the masses kept the faith. Bright and buoyant in disposition, full of mother-wit and genuine humor, they sought rather to baffle their persecutors than to resist them. The Protestants who made their home in the hill-girt city were sometimes easy-going, good-natured people who professed to regard the Celts as Helots, yet intermarried with them—as the invaders did with the natives since the days of Strongbow—and often connived at the papistry of wives and children. The women who nursed the babes of Protestant parents were Catholics, and in rambles through the gay streets and romantic suburbs did not fail, it may be readily conjectured, to point out to their young charges the ruins of Gill Abbey,† and the North Ab-

\* St. Finbar (the fair-haired), first bishop of Cork, died at Cloyne in 630. His festival is kept September 25. His monastery and university covered the ground now occupied by St. Marie's of the Isle.

† Gill Abbey, in which at one time dwelt seventeen prelates and seven hundred monks and priests, was founded by "a poor man and a stranger," Gilla Aedha O'Mugin, who was elevated to the mitre by St. Malachy about 1140, and died in the year of the Norman invasion, 1172, "full of the grace of God, the tower of virginity, and the wisdom of his time."

The Red Abbey belonged to the Augustinians, and the North Abbey to the Franciscans.

bey, and Red Abbey, and old St. Finbar's—"that used to be a thtrue church, ye know, me darlin's." Men, women, and children went on pilgrimages, and when sickness crept about their vigorous frames—which was seldom—they sought cures in the pure waters of some holy well rather than from the prescriptions of learned physicians—

"They loved to pray where saints have prayed,  
And kneel where they have knelt."

Steam, gas, telegraph, telephone, and many other modern "notions" make the Cork of to-day very different from the Cork of the last century. The ancient water-ways have been bridged over and are now dusty thoroughfares, the nomenclature of which still suggests the not very remote period when Cork was the Venice of the south, and, like the beautiful mistress of the Adriatic, went through the yearly ceremony of being wedded to the sea.

The Cork into which Mother McAuley travelled July 6, 1837, was but little changed from the Cork of Nano Nagle. It had, indeed, escaped its old boundaries, but here were still unchanged the streets and byways which that apostolic woman trod as she wandered, lantern in hand and shrouded in a peasant's cloak, from north to south and from east to west, before the morning's dawn and after the sun's setting, in her missions of mercy, not leaving a single garret in Cork unvisited. Her daughters, recently bound by the vow of enclosure, no longer appeared in these wretched apartments, and the Sisters of Mercy now came to take their places. The very chapels in which Nano Nagle had prayed, mostly miserable hovels in obscure alleys, had not as yet quite disappeared. No Catholic dared to call his place of worship a *church*. Such fine old churches as were not blown up by gunpowder or battered by English cannon were in the hands of the church by law established.

The immense barn known as the South Chapel, which replaced a thatched cabin in 1766, is probably the only specimen of the primitive style now existing in Cork. But in 1837 Carey's Lane Chapel and the Capuchin Chapel in Blackamoor's Lane, of which Father Mathew was then guardian ; Broad Lane Chapel, of the Franciscans, and the Chapel of the Augustinians in Brunswick Street, hidden among stores ; the North Chapel, in which Nano Nagle so often heard her daily Mass, and the wretched little friary of the Dominicans, beneath the shadow of Shandon steeple, to which the great foundress and her pious brother Joseph presented a tabernacle surmounted by a canopy—an extraordinary step in church decoration for such remote times, —all these ancient places might have served as stations for a pious pilgrimage.

Few could appreciate the traditions and associations that clung to these unsightly structures better than the holy foundress. In 1837 Cork contained two Presentation convents, one Ursuline convent, and a recently-founded house of the Irish Sisters of Charity. There were nuns whose memories carried them back three-quarters of a century, as Mother Aloysia Moylan, who, though thought too delicate for the life of a nun, lived over seventy-two years in the convent. She had known France before the Revolution and in the days of Louis XV., and had conversed with people who had seen the triumphal progress of poor James II. through the main street of her native city. Dr. Murphy was the immediate successor of her brother, Bishop Moylan, who brought the nuns—contraband freight—to Ireland, 1771.

The cradle of restored monasticism in Ireland is the South Presentation Convent, Cork, built by Nano Nagle for her Ursulines, and occupied by them till they removed to the fine convent, Blackrock, in 1824. The first visit of the Sisters of Mercy on their arrival in Cork was to this hallowed cradle. The quiet little cemetery had a peculiar

interest for Mother McAuley, who had so much in common with her great predecessor in the work of popular education. And it is not easy even at this distant date to read without emotion the quaint inscription on the clumsy, box-shaped stone cube that covers her sacred remains:

“Here lie, waiting, 'tis hoped, a glorious resurrection, the remains of Miss Honora Nagle, daughter of Garret Nagle, Esquire, of Ballygriffin, and venerable foundress of this monastery of St. Ursula, and of the Institute of the Charitable Instruction, whose life and fortune were always devoted to the service of God and of the poor; whose piety, humility, and self-denial made a most salutary impression on an admiring public; and whose charity and zeal were most singularly and successfully exercised for more than thirty years in the instruction of multitudes of poor children, rearing them true servants of God and useful members of society. She departed this life, envied by many, regretted by all, on the 26th day of April, 1784, aged fifty-six years.

R. I. P.

“Moriatur anima mea” (Num. xxiii. 10). ”

A life somewhat like Mother McAuley's had been the dream of Nano Nagle. Her institution was called “of the Charitable Instruction,” and for more than twenty years after her death her children, then called Sisters of the Sacred Heart, continued to visit the sick, being bound, like herself, only by annual vows. She never saw the rules now observed by the Presentation nuns, who glory in being her children, and the habit which they have made familiar in many lands was assumed only in the next century.

Preserved in the archives of the North Presentation Convent is a curious relic of the penal days, “a license” given the foundress of the house by the Protestant Bishop of Cork to teach school, that dignitary not having the remotest idea that his “beloved Margaret Fitzgerald” belonged to a religious community :

“Thomas, by divine permission, Lord Bishop of Cork

and Ross, to our beloved Margaret Fitzgerald, greeting: Whereas, you are recommended to us as a proper person to be licensed to keep a poor-school in the parish of St. Mary's, Shandon, in our diocese of Cork. We, therefore, by these presents, give you full power and authority to teach and instruct children in the English tongue, writing and arithmetic, and other lawful and honest documents, allowed and approved of by the laws and statutes of this kingdom, within the said parish, and we appoint you a schoolmistress within the same parish during our will and pleasure, with all wages, stipends, salary, and other profits and emoluments to the office of schoolmistress belonging and appertaining; you having first taken the oath required by law as Roman Catholic in this behalf to be taken and subscribed. All which by law you ought to subscribe.

“In testimony whereof we have caused our episcopal seal to be hereunto affixed. Dated the 14th day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine.

“THOMAS GREGG,

“THOMAS, CORK AND ROSS.”

This was only thirty-seven years previous to Mother McAuley's arrival in Cork. The difficulties of bestowing Catholic education even in the early part of the nineteenth century were such that a Catholic convicted of teaching children without the written license of the presiding Anglican bishop might at any moment be visited with the numerous and heavy pains and penalties which the penal code provided for such a grievous infraction of its letter and spirit.

The Sisters established by Miss Nagle were styled *Sisters of the Charitable Instruction of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*,\* so that it was in Ireland that a community of religious under the adorable title, *Sacred Heart of Jesus*, was first instituted. The same is true of the beautiful name *Sisters of Charity*.

\* We have never been able to learn exactly when or why the daughters of Nano Nagle ceased to be designated by this beautiful title, bestowed on them twenty-three years before Madame Barat founded her Congregation or Society of the Sacred Heart.

The Bishop of Cork who invited Mother McAuley to his episcopal city was himself a link between the present and the past, and a sort of relic of the olden time, who would probably have spent his life at the professor's desk had not Dr. Moylan recalled him from Li-bon to the home mission, which so sadly needed her exiled sons. When Dr. Moylan passed away, 1815, in the eightieth year of his age and the fortieth of his episcopacy, Father John Murphy was chosen to succeed him, and he lived to govern his native diocese for thirty-two years—years of transition for the Church. Mother McAuley found Bishop Murphy kind and fatherly, a little quick or positive in temper, and greatly devoted to the education of the poor. She did not like him the less because he was an enthusiast about books. Many still living can bear testimony to the accuracy of the statements of the German traveller, Kohl, who says that "the bishop's sitting-rooms and dining-rooms are filled with books, and even in his bed rooms every spare space is similarly occupied. His attendants, and even his maid-servants, sleep in little libraries. The walls of his staircase and the corridors of his rooms are filled with books up to the very garrets. His house contains the largest collection of books in Ireland, and is rich in costly and interesting works.\*" Dr. Murphy was known far and near as "the bishop who liked books and nuns." A fine selection from this assemblage of libraries afterwards found its way to the private library of the Sisters of Mercy, St. Marie's of the Isle.

On the 6th of July, 1837, Mother McAuley planted in this congenial soil the sixth branch of her Institute. The superior, Mother Clare Moore, was described in a letter from Mother McAuley to Bishop Murphy, two years later, as "the best Latin scholar among us," which was saying a great deal at a time when the accomplished authoress of *Geraldine* was a member of the Institute. But the in-

\* *Travels in Ireland.*

tellectual abilities of this saintly religious, however pleasing to the literary bishop, were far from being her highest recommendation, as will be more fully seen in the course of these volumes. Sister Mary Josephine Warde and Sister Mary Vincent Deasy, whom we shall meet again ; Sister Mary Anastasia McGawley, who died in Pittsburgh, 1847 ; and Sister Mary Aloysius O'Connell, still living in the Convent of Mercy, Sunderland, Durham, formed the first Sisters of the Cork foundation.

Long before the party came within sound of the musical "Bells of Shandon" they were warmly greeted by clergy and laity, who came in crowds to meet them and seemed to vie with each other in testifying respect and affection. Rev. William O'Connor, brother to the physician who is still the medical attendant of the community, was charged with the pleasing duty of escorting them to their new home. The first breakfast they took in Cork was at the South Presentation Convent, Douglas Street. The bishop's relatives, several of whom were among the merchant-princes of Cork—"a place of great trade," as Nano Nagle described it—were munificent in their gifts to the new Sisterhood. And so on a bright summer day, forty-four years ago, the little colony of Sisters of Mercy settled down amid all manner of happy auguries in a modest, humble home in the "beautiful citie."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE CORK FOUNDATION, CONTINUED.

Miss Barbara Anne Goold—An austere and holy Life—Genuine Almsgiving entailing Sufferings on the Donor—Rutland Street House—The *Déjeuner*—The old House and the new—Blessed Associations—The most precious of all Gifts to a religious Community—“Blessed are they that dwell in Thy House, O Lord !”—Description of St. Marie’s of the Isle—Its exquisite Memorial Chapels—Mrs. Lyons—The Chapel of the Sacred Heart—Death of little Catherine Macaulay—Extraordinary Meekness of Mother Clare—Letters—The other Mary Clare—The Bishop of Cork—The Sister of Divine Providence—Joys and Sorrows.

THE foundress of the Cork Convent of Mercy was Miss Barbara Anne Goold, a gentlewoman of great wealth and greater charity, who allowed herself none of the luxuries of life, and stinted herself even in the necessaries, that she might have the more to devote to works of beneficence. Many will remember Miss Goold—“Miss Bab,” as some of her poor pensioners rather irreverently styled her: a wizened-looking old lady, shy and timid, whose notice the young people were proud to attract; her sallow countenance, her well-marked features, the two little bunches of curls that shaded her piercing eyes, the subdued but inexpressibly sweet smile which rarely lit up the dear old face; the whole mien and gait, the petite figure dressed as poorly as some who came to the convent gate for the morning meal, yet distinguished for an air of antiquated gentility which no mere *parvenue* could have assumed. Barbara Goold was as penurious as a miser in all that regarded her individual comfort. She resided in a small house on the Upper Glanmire Road, where she led a life of prayer,

penance, and active benevolence. In her last illness the lone gentlewoman was daily visited by Mother Josephine Warde and Sister Mary Augustine Power, both of whom she loved very dearly. Every 28th of August she used to send a basket of apples to the latter—a gift duly appreciated and gratefully acknowledged. She administered her wealth as steward for the poor, and it required all Mother Josephine's influence to compel her to take the little comforts necessary in her severe illness. She had lived, and she wished to die, like a pauper, for love of Him who, being rich, became poor for our sakes ; and on one occasion she scrupled taking a few oysters prescribed for her in her extreme debility. During her last sickness she used to repeat very frequently the words : "I long to be dissolved and to be with Christ." Death had for many years been the daily subject of her meditations, and until she became quite feeble after she had attained her seventy-fifth year she was never known to be absent from her daily Mass.

Miss Goold survived Mother McAuley seventeen years, dying in 1858. As foundress of the Cork convent she was buried in the vault which encloses the precious remains of the Sisters who were her early friends.

Humble and retiring to a fault, Miss Goold had the air and manners of a perfect gentlewoman. For twenty-one years she was a frequent visitor at the Cork convent, where, as foundress, many privileges would have been allowed her ; but she never claimed any. When she called she waited in an outer parlor like any ordinary visitor, or in the reception-room of the poor women who came to inquire for situations ; nor would she ever cross the threshold, unless invited by the mother-superior. At her last visit she slipped into the hands of the portress a check for one thousand pounds, and would not wait to be thanked.

A spacious, well-adapted mansion, fully furnished in conventional style, and a gift of two thousand pounds were presented to Mother McAuley in 1837 by this most

charitable, mortified, and unostentatious woman. The neighborhood had once been aristocratic, and the new convent, stately and gloomy-looking, was just such a house as the ancient Miss Goold would naturally select; it was described by reverend mother as roomy enough for the number who came to occupy it, and it had an air of decaying grandeur that suggested fallen royalty in retirement, or made it look like a suitable retreat for a dethroned princess or a retired prelate. Its furniture was as sombre as its aspect; a sort of neutral expression pervaded everything. When the holy foundress led her little flock within its walls it was found that several ladies, whose gay dresses and lively manners seemed strangely out of harmony with the pensive surroundings, had provided the travellers with a sumptuous repast, from which she selected the more delicate viands for the sick poor, to whom her children were to begin their ministrations of mercy that very day.

Rutland Street house, however, was to be but a temporary home; hence its gloomy situation and dusty, desolate aspect made little matter to its inmates. Yet it was fifteen years before the migration of the community to a finer house was happily accomplished. And the elder Sisters had grown to love the old house with a love which they could not readily transfer to their new and beautiful home. The former had associations which can never belong to St. Marie's of the Isle. This noble pile, celebrated far and near for its chaste conventional beauty and correctness of architectural detail, wanted one grace in the eyes of the foundresses who carried the spirit of their great mother into its beauteous cloisters. *Her* feet had trodden the strait corridors of the old house; in its small but exquisitely decorated chapel *she* had offered them all to God and received the vows that bound them for ever to His blessed service; time and again St. Mary's had been sanctified by her heavenly presence. They could say one to another: "Here our venerated foundress prayed; here she settled

my vocation ; here I received from her the advice to which, under God, I shall owe my salvation ; in this room I caught the first glimpse of her heavenly countenance ; in that I knelt for her last blessing. There she sat at our happy recreations ; here she instructed and prepared us for our holy profession. She was in that spot when I handed her the letter announcing that the death change had come upon her beloved niece. It was in this room that I found her weeping over her revered and beloved friend, Dr. Nolan."

But the seniors have almost all passed away, and their successors feel that their great mother still walks among them, and that her sweet spirit broods dove-like over a spot sacred and venerable for centuries before they translated to it the sweet and holy traditions of their dear old Rutland Street home.

Father Coleridge, S.J., in his interesting article, already alluded to, on the *First Sister of Mercy*, says : "The Institute of the Sisters of Mercy has not yet been in existence forty years, yet its convents generally seem haunted by the traditions of a long line of saints ; and with all the constant intercourse with the external world which is imposed on their inmates by their laborious works of charity, they breathe an air of peace and recollection which seems like the inheritance of many generations of cloister-life."

"This most precious of all gifts to a religious community" was eminently conspicuous in the old convent on Rutland Street. There was an austere look about the whole place. The very atmosphere seemed redolent of holiness. Nothing conventional appeared in the exterior, but there was no mistaking the purport of the edifice once you came within its walls. For on an arch over the partition that divided the hall from the ante-room, in large gilt letters, were the beautiful words of the Psalmist :

“BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DWELL IN THY HOUSE, O LORD !  
THEY SHALL PRAISE THEE FOR EVER AND EVER !”

These words, and a touching commentary on them by a calm-faced, gentle nun, cast a blessed spell over at least one youthful visitor which has never been wholly shaken off, and inspired in a heart already too much given to the world a desire to renounce all that is perishable and be numbered among those to whom the royal prophet foretells so glorious a destiny.

The magnificent convent, St. Marie’s of the Isle, is not an unworthy successor of the grand Dominican priory that sheltered the last Catholic monarch of these realms. Its massive proportions and mediæval aspect arrest the eye of the most casual observer, while a closer inspection shows its strictly conventional character and its perfect adaptation to the purposes for which it has been erected. It stands on an islet between two branches of the Lee. The convent, cloisters, and chapel are built of reddish brownstone, with bright limestone coignes, door-dressings, and mullions. The Orphanage and House of Mercy, in the same style, are connected with the main building by long cloisters. The schools are spacious, well ventilated, and furnished with all the modern appliances by which learning is supposed to be made easy or royal roads thereto discovered. Within the convent are several memorial chapels exquisitely fitted up. One, dedicated to the “Angels of the Holy Souls,” was decorated by Rev. William Cunningham as a monument to his deceased brother, for whose repose Mass is offered there at regular intervals. The Mater Misericordiæ Oratory was founded by Mrs. Lyons, a native of New York, widow of a Cork merchant, a wealthy and most benevolent lady, who joined the Sisterhood in 1855 ; but, her health failing, she was obliged to relinquish her pious design of devoting herself to God by the vows of the Institute, though, according to a provision of the Rule, she remained

in the convent as a benefactress, and died of cancer soon after her admission in this capacity.

On November 3, 1870, the convent chapel, which is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was solemnly consecrated by Most Rev. Dr. Delany; Rev. J. J. Coughlan preached a most impressive sermon from the text: Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built?

A beautiful stained-glass window shows our Lord discovering His Heart to Blessed Margaret Mary, with life-size figures of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph on either side. Over the side-altar which faces the grating is an exquisite window representing the group of the Annunciation. The altar is of pure white marble, and among the statuary are figures of St. Raphael, St. Michael, Sts. Peter and John.

St. Marie's of the Isle is one of the most beautiful ornaments of the fine old Catholic city of Cork—a city which, from the surpassing loveliness of its situation, can never be as rich in architectural as it is in natural beauty.

The holy foundress had been little more than two weeks in Cork when letters from Dublin called her home to watch over the last hours of her beloved niece, "the innocent, playful Catherine." She started July 24, but "the spotless soul" whose dying moments she went to soothe did not leave its earthly tenement till August 7. It was Mother McAuley's intention to return to Cork when the last sad offices were rendered to her departed child, but pressing business detained her, much to the grief of her poor little flock in the fair city by the Lee. On the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, September 8, she writes to Carlow:

"I expected to be in Cork before this. The poor Sisters will be greatly disappointed. I am now waiting for a packet—one got off without my having heard of it. I left

my poor Sister M. Clare in a very unfinished state. She writes full of doubts and fears, and no wonder. I know she has too much to encounter till the way is made easier for her. Please God, I will go there soon."

The above Sister, Georgina Moore, in religion Sister M. Clare, had entered the Institute in 1830, and was one of the *First Seven* admitted to the holy habit January 23, 1832. When appointed superior of the Cork convent she was only in her twenty-sixth year. Fair of face and gentle in manner, her education was of the highest order, and she was specially beloved by the holy foundress for the beautiful qualities of mind and heart which caused her to be regarded from the day of her entrance as the Angel of the Institute. Young and ardent as she was, she had become by grace almost passionless, and her extraordinary meekness was remarked by every one who beheld her :

"A sweete, attractive kind of grace,  
A full assurance given by looks ;  
Continual comfort in a face,  
The lineaments of Gospel bookees."

The authoress of *Geraldine* speaks of "the thoughtful, holy countenance" of Mother Clare ; and the venerated Bishop Griffiths, of pious memory, said of her a little later: "I never before saw so much maturity in so young a person ; she has judgment in her countenance." Her administrative powers were in keeping with her other gifts, and it was said of her that she was as fitted to govern a kingdom as a religious community. Yet she shrank from the responsibility of planting the young Institute in a new soil, and it was with a heart and conscience full of doubts and fears that she undertook the onerous task ; for Mother McAuley would hear no excuse, and she was fain to submit. The results verified a penetration never at fault, nor did the foundress ever invest with authority a more edifying and competent superior. But Cork was not destined

to retain this treasure. Mother Clare became foundress of the congregation in England. She remained in London from November, 1839, till June, 1841, Sister M. Josephine Warde taking her place during her absence. In December, 1841, about six months after her return, she was allowed to go to London again at the urgent request of Bishop Griffiths and Very Rev. Peter Butler, pastor of Bermondsey, and it was finally arranged that she should remain. Mother Clare governed the Bermondsey house till her death, December 14, 1874, in the sixty-fourth year of her age.—R.I.P. We shall meet her again on the English mission.

On her first visit mother-foundress had the misfortune to incur the displeasure of the bishop by admitting a young person whose dower was either insufficient or insecurely invested. His lordship had intimated his views on this point at their very first interview, but, not understanding his intimations in the light of prohibitions, the holy mother could not refuse a subject, otherwise eligible, for want of pecuniary means; and the dear old prelate, who called a mere misunderstanding by a harsher name, was not easily pacified. He must have lectured her very severely, for she never forgot the lesson thus unpleasantly taught her, and to the end of her life regarded his lordship as a rather formidable personage, whose directions and suggestions she must endeavor not to misapprehend. In June, 1841, she wrote, relative to "our old beloved companion, Sister M. Clare," who had just returned from London: "The Bishop of Cork met her here and is quite proud of her return. He says she must come home directly, and adds, what I have no recollection of, that I promised to let the other Mary Clare go to Cork to do some wonderful things for him. So the artist goes, too. He made it imperative, and I dare not venture to contend with his lordship."

"The other Mary Clare," or Sister M. Clare Augustine,

the elder sister of Mother Clare, had joined the Institute in 1837. In the beautiful church art of illumination it is doubtful if this lady had a superior among her contemporaries, and we are not aware that she had an equal. Mother McAuley used playfully to call her "the artist." Sister M. C. Augustine died quite recently (October, 1880) "a heavenly death," at a very advanced age, retaining her mental faculties in all their acuteness to the very last. She was confined to bed only about a fortnight. About an hour before her death she became very livid, and, her failing speech refusing to convey her thoughts, she took up her book and pointed to the prayer for a dying person who loses the use of speech, that the Sisters might recite it as her soul was passing away. She went to God rejoicing half an hour after receiving Holy Viaticum. Sister M. Clare Augustine was the last at the parent house who had been received and professed by the holy foundress. There are six more living: one in Ireland, one in England, two in Australia, and two in America (1881). There are several living who received the white veil from her hands.

At her second visit the mother-foundress completely regained the good old bishop's favor, which she was most careful not to risk again. It is not easy for those whose duties oblige them to direct others to escape being a little positive now and then; perhaps this is why Faber thinks that superiority has a tendency to make people narrow-minded, and seems thankful that it does not make them narrow-hearted as well. Certainly there was nothing of the latter quality in the venerable bishop. The attention and respect which mingled in his fatherly care of her dear children won her heart more than the deference he showed herself. She revered him as a true father and friend, and sought his wise counsel in many doubtful and difficult matters. It was at the profession of Sister M. Vincent Deasy that Bishop Murphy suggested the expediency of declaring in the formula of the vows the special objects of

the Order of Mercy as distinct from other religious societies, and it was therefore agreed that the clause, "and the service of the poor, sick, and ignorant," be inserted, which the Holy See subsequently approved. The House of Mercy for the protection of poor, virtuous young women was his favorite charity. He used to say that he carried all the Sisters of Mercy in his heart daily when he offered the holy sacrifice of the Mass. It was remarked at the time, and has since been repeated, that "the Mercy" was the favorite Order with bishop, priests, and laity in Cork. The extraordinary liberality of all classes, and their hearty sympathy with every good work inaugurated by the Sisters of Mercy, would appear to give some color of truth to the remark. All this was duly appreciated by the foundress, who wrote to the superioress of the Cork convent: "I have a firm hope that the Institute over which you now preside will not be excelled by any in the Order." This hope was eventually realized. But the cautious prudence of the kind prelate was sometimes an impediment to its progress; so true is it, as Mother McAuley was wont to say, that without the cross the real progress cannot come. His surveillance extended so minutely into the fortunes, families, and connections of all who applied for admission that poor Mother Clare became quite disheartened and wrote confidentially to the foundress: "No one likes to propose here now, there is so much scrutiny into family concerns, and so much about money, though we find that a little suffices for us, and we have a good deal to spare [for the poor]."

The holy foundress, though not displeased to find ecclesiastics careful in selecting candidates for the congregation, thought the Cork prelate excessively so. When the Bishop of Meath, who had a similar tendency, hesitated about admitting to profession a novice whose family declined to pay more than half the promised portion, she wrote: "I read such sentences with satisfaction. They prove a fa-

therly guidance and are a shield from censure. I like this [episcopal surveillance] when not carried quite so far as—Cork."

In the above instance, when the Tullamore superioress, in pleading with Dr. Cantwell, remarked that Mother McAuley had a sort of special devotion to receiving ladies who labored under no other disqualification than want of dower, his lordship replied to the effect that so well she might, being, according to popular rumor, fabulously wealthy. The holy foundress desired our old acquaintance, Mother Marianne, to undeceive his lordship, "who," she went on to say, "was greatly mistaken" as to her reputed wealth; and she added that "he little knew how much she and her community had to rely on Providence." In point of fact, however, she resembled St. Teresa in this and in other things. She loved to admit suitable candidates who had no dowry. Beyond paying as she went and keeping out of debt, as she always most scrupulously did, Mother McAuley rarely, if ever, threw away a thought on money. Bishop Murphy, who often rallied her on her disinterestedness, which he thought excessive, used to call her "the Sister of Divine Providence."

Cork was associated in the mind of reverend mother with some sweet joys and some bitter sorrows. It was here, on St. Teresa's day, 1837, that she received the sad news of Bishop Nolan's death, and wrote the beautiful letter of condolence on that afflicting event which we have already quoted. Here, too, she learned that death had seized her beloved niece; and on the 26th of October, 1837, letters announcing the mortal illness of Sister M. de Chantal McCann hurried her home. But the saintly invalid expired on the 27th, before it was possible for her mother to reach her death-bed in Kingstown.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### BEAUTIFUL DEATHS.

Early Accessions—First Death—Beautiful Deaths—House of Mercy—Pension-School—Blind Asylum—Jail—Accession of English Converts—Bishop Griffiths—Bermondsey—Foundations—First and last Visit of Reverend Mother to George's Hill—Letters—Mother Josephine Warde—Always in Office—Her Prudence and Meekness—Letters—Mother McAuley's great Interest in the Pension-Schools—Her Love for the English Sisters.

MOTHER McAULEY'S usual experience awaited her in Cork: the young and the fair and the gay flock-ed to her standard. Among the first reinforcements were Miss Ellen Lane, who came directly from the neighboring Ursuline convent, in her seventeenth year, making no stay with her friends in the world; Miss Margaret Lyster, sister to Mr. Richard Lyster, an artist of more than local celebri-ty; and Miss McCarthy, of Queenstown—then Cove—also a pupil of the Ursulines, and one of a large band of sisters, some of whom, it was hoped, would follow her example. Miss Mahony, belonging to a well known Cork family; Miss Barry of Kanturk, and Miss Hogan, sister of the celeb-rated sculptor of that name; and Miss Wildridge, of Dublin, a convert, speedily followed. Miss Frances Prendergast, of Ardfinan Castle, County Tipperary, a beautiful, dashing girl, celebrated throughout the country as a reckless horse-woman, happening to call at Rutland Street one day, had a casual interview with Mother Josephine Warde, the unforeseen result of which was that one who had been all for the world became in a moment all for God, and dropped on her knees, begging to be aggregated to the holy com-

pany. Her sister Lucinda and several other relatives followed this beautiful example.\*

Sisters Mary Clare Lyster, Mary de Sales Lane, and Mary Josephine McCarthy were professed in 1840. In the same year the first death occurred in the Cork house—Sister M. Frances Mahony, whose last hours were soothed by the most delicate attentions of all, but especially Mother Josephine, who nursed her night and day, and in whose arms she died the death of the just. And here we may remark that the singularly beautiful deaths which occurred from time to time in this house consoled the survivors and attracted many to “that blessed and happy life which makes death so sweet.”

There was Sister Mary Gertrude Hogan, remarkable for a humility that could not be satiated and a fervor that never cooled. A younger member, once inadvertently opening her cell, found her absorbed in prayer, her arms extended in the form of a cross. At the crisis of the dreadful fever which was to open heaven for her she fell into a stupor which proved to be the forerunner of death. But, hearing the prayers of the Sisters beside her, she suddenly recovered consciousness, and, brightening up into a sort of ecstasy, she called upon the Holy Name of Jesus three times, and then died as she had lived, with the reputation of a saint † It was said that her union with God had never once been interrupted.

There was Sister Mary Agnes Daly, whose death was particularly striking. Mother Josephine Warde watched beside her as her young life was slowly ebbing, and, seeing

\* The motto which Miss Prendergast chose on entering the convent, and which was engraven on her ring, was: *I have chosen to be an abject in the house of the Lord.* Well did the once worldly girl reduce this sublime device to practice during her short but full religious career. Her sweet humility of look, word, and manner rendered her a most charming addition to the Cork community.

† It was said that Sister M. Gertrude's talents fully equalled those of her world-famed brother, Hogan the sculptor. The work which many consider his masterpiece, “The Dead Christ,” is among the treasures of the neighboring church, St. Finbar's.

her smiling and looking so radiant that it seemed as though a glory already encircled her sweet face, she asked her : " Are you not very happy now, dear Sister ? " " Oh ! I am so happy, for I saw Him," she replied in thrilling tones. " I never," said an eye-witness, " saw such a picture of happiness, in death and after death, as our sweet Mary Agnes."

There was Sister Mary Gonzaga O'Connor, who had been for some time in delicate health, but could not live away from the sacramental presence of Him whom she loved so well, and who, taken with a sudden hemorrhage as she knelt in prayer on the Octave of Corpus Christi, actually died on the altar-step.

But to describe all the heavenly deaths\* at St. Marie's of the Isle would be to go through the whole necrology. It was as if God delighted to pour out visibly His best blessings on these guileless souls who had made death sweet to so many.

The visitation of the sick was begun at once on the arrival of the Sisters ; the instruction of large classes of externs followed next ; then came the House of Mercy, always so useful in a seaport town ; and, finally, a pension-school for children of the upper and middle classes, there being no school of this kind nearer than the Ursuline convent at the village of Blackrock, which, being two miles below the city, was inaccessible as a day school. The Sisters took charge of the instruction of the inmates of the Asylum for the Blind and the county jail, the latter one of the finest structures in the suburbs, with an outward court and entrance like those of a fortified castle.

From its first establishment the Order of Mercy had excited a deep interest in the Catholics of England, and among its early subjects were several English converts. Right Rev. Thomas Griffiths, Bishop of Olena and Vicar-Apos-

\* One of these dying Sisters, when asked how she felt, said, alluding to the situation of the infirmary close to the chapel : " I am in heaven already, my darling ; there is only a board between the Blessed Sacrament and myself."

tolic of the London District, desired to found a Convent of Mercy in London, and selected Bermondsey as the most appropriate spot, as having already the nucleus of a religious body, in this way: Several ladies had formed themselves into a sort of lay association for relieving the poor and instructing children in Bermondsey, one of the poorest and most populous sections of London. As some of their number desired to be constituted into a religious community, two, with the bishop's sanction, applied to Mother McAuley for leave to join her congregation, which was readily granted. These were Miss Agnew, niece to Sir Andrew Agnew, the celebrated antiquarian, and herself known in the literary world as the authoress of *Geraldine*, the best work of its kind ever published; and Miss Taylor, whose abilities, though of a most useful description, were considerably less brilliant than those of her accomplished companion. For their novitiate they chose Cork, as being more remote than Dublin and less liable to interruption from visitors.

These ladies set out from England early in 1838. The chaplain of the convent boarded their vessel at Cove and accompanied them up the beautiful river to Cork. They had scarcely reached Rutland Street when the bishop came to welcome them to Ireland and to the Convent of Mercy. A little later Mother McAuley came to Cork to see them, and it was then arranged that if they persevered to profession they would be sent back to Bermondsey with such Sisters as might be selected to aid them in carrying out their pious views in England.

From old Rutland Street foundations went out to Bermondsey (1839), to Sunderland (1843), and to Queenstown (1850). From its elegant successor, St. Marie's of the Isle, Templemore, Bantry, and Passage-West have been supplied. But so great is the demand for Sisters of Mercy in Cork and its immediate vicinity that the "Isle" has been able to do comparatively little more than endeavor to supply it.

Mother Clare Moore was selected to introduce the Order into England, and left Cork with the Sisters who were professed for that mission August 19, 1839, the day following the ceremony. The party was escorted by the foundress herself, who had come to the profession of the English Sisters. They visited Charleville, Limerick, Tullamore, and Carlow, with Kingstown and Booterstown, and, at the request of Mother McAuley's great and steadfast friend, Dr. Blake, went to Newry, the episcopal town of the diocese of Dromore, where they remained for several days, guests of the Poor Clares, who had been anxious to see them, and who received them with utmost kindness and cordiality. This saintly prelate, so well described by O'Connell as "a bishop after St. Paul's own heart," was anxious to introduce the Sisters of Mercy into his diocese; but as Newry was then a very hotbed of Orangeism, it was decided to wait for a more propitious season, and some years after Mother McAuley's departure from earth the venerable prelate to whom she owed so much had the happiness to welcome her spiritual children to his ancient diocese.

Mother McAuley and the Bermondsey party remained in Dublin till November 18, the day appointed by Bishop Griffiths for their journey to England. To enable the missionaries to gain as many lights and as much experience as possible she allowed them to visit several religious institutions and examine their workings. She herself went with them to dear old George's Hill, to the great delight of the affectionate nuns with whom she had passed that, perhaps, happiest time of the religious life—the period of spiritual infancy known as the novitiate. "How well I remember the day Mother McAuley visited us after an interval of eight years," writes a venerable religious of that convent, "and how glad we were to see her! She kissed the chairs in the chapter-room and in the community-room." And a letter to Carlow, dated November 17, 1839, shows that

Mother McAuley extended her affectionate embraces to at least one chair in the noviceship :

“We visited dear old George’s Hill, and the affectionate nuns were delighted to see us. I ran to embrace the old rush chair on which I used to sit, but kissed a grand new one in mistake. However, I took back the kiss, as ducky Mary Quinn [one of the little orphans] would say.”

The Bermondsey foundation left Dublin in the *Queen* on November 18, 1839, and Mother Clare, who was lent to the new house for one year, remained nearly two. But a more particular account of this establishment will be found in our next volume, which treats of the Order of Mercy in England and the colonies and in the Crimean War.

When Mother Clare left Cork Sister Mary Josephine Warde was appointed to preside during her absence, and when it was finally arranged that the former was to return no more the latter became mother-superior.

This truly estimable and zealous religious, who was destined to spend nearly all her conventional life in the office of mother-superior, governed the Cork community from 1839 till her happy death, 1879, except for two periods, in one of which she was mistress of novices, and in the other mother-assistant. Under her long and able administration the Institute made steady progress.

The meekness and prudence of Mother Josephine endeared her in a singular manner to the holy foundress, who often mentions her in terms of praise and affection. The following letter, dated Saturday, January 27, 1838, will be found interesting :

“MY DEAR SISTER MARY JOSEPHINE: In a flying hurry I am going to say a few words to you. Sister Mary Frances [Mother Josephine’s sister in Carlow] tells me she had a most consoling letter from you. Thanks be to God you are so happy! Indeed, it affords me real comfort—the contrary would afflict me very much. The union which exists among you all will draw down the favor and blessing of

Heaven, and you will soon be a [large] as well as an edifying community, please God. Do not neglect praying for me particularly, and believe me always,

“Your affectionate mother in Christ,

“M. C. McAULEY.”

When Mother Josephine had been just two months acting superior, October 18, 1839, the foundress wrote her the following :

“MY DEAREST SISTER MARY JOSEPHINE: I cannot tell you how anxious I feel to hear that all with you goes on happily, with good prospect of increase [of subjects]. I pray most earnestly, and indeed constantly, for you, and I have a confident hope that the Institute over which you now preside will not be excelled by any; I could even wish it to excel poor Baggot Street. Tell my dear Sister M. Vincent [Deasy] I am quite disappointed that she never writes me one little note. I fear she will not patronize my next work; I dare not venture to dedicate it to her, if she does not give me more encouragement.\*

“Is Sister M. Anastasia [McGawley] very useful? I know she is very good. In dear Sisters M. Aloysius [O'Connell] and M. Frances [Mahony] you have all that could be desired. The last additions are, I trust, all desirable. How is your venerated bishop, and [Rev.] Mr. Delany,† and Father Mathew, whose fame has reached the most remote corner of the land? The walls of Dublin are covered with placards proclaiming the good he has accomplished. It [the temperance crusade] is no longer a laughing matter. All description of persons speak most seriously of his extraordinary success, and all wish he could extend his influence to every place.

“How is Miss Goold? Give her my best love. Are the dear children ‡ as attentive as is reasonable\* to expect? I feel confident you will never seek anything unreasonable. I trust that on my return from London I shall be able to make some excuse to go see you.

“The pension-school in Carlow is making great progress. You must get their regulations. . . . Some sweet

\* Mother McAuley published in 1839 a useful little book called *Cottage Controversy*, which she dedicated to Sister Mary Vincent Deasy.

† Now Bishop of Cork.

‡ Of the pension-school.

young persons amongst them [the pupils]. They [the nuns] are all interested, and some prefer it [the pension-school] to any other duty. Sister M. Vincent would, I am sure, enter into the spirit of it and give one hour every day. . . . The girls are obliged to acquire a perfect knowledge of their lessons at home. . . . One [Sister] has the French class, another the grammar and geography, and so on. They have one already [a pension-school] at Naas, and have eighteen pupils, also a poor-school. Write me every particular. Give my most affectionate love to all, and believe me, my very dear Sister, your fondly attached

“M. C. McAULEY.

“P.S. We all love the English Sisters more and more every day. You know by this time that we leave for London November 18, as appointed by Dr. Griffiths.”

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE CORK FOUNDATION, CONTINUED.

Sister M. V. Deasy—Her literary Labors—Mother McAuley greatly encouraged the literary Tastes of her Children—Her high Appreciation of their Accomplishments—She wished them always to have some Work on hand—To utilize Odds and Ends of Time—The Pension-School in 1838—The School Children at Examen of Conscience—Mother McAuley anxious to preserve the Refinement of the Sisters—Similar Sentiments of Father St. Leger, S.J.—Extract from a Letter of his—The Blood of the Martyrs the Seed of the Christians—Charitable Institutions of the Cork Convent—Mr. Dan Murphy—The Orphanage—The Mercy Hospital—Workhouse Hospital—Bishop Delany introduces the Sisters of Mercy to the Small-pox Hospital—A Victim of Charity—A touching Tribute.

THE Sister M. Vincent just mentioned, sister to Baron Deasy,\* well known then and since on the Munster Circuit, was one of the most accomplished members of a highly cultured family. Two most useful spiritual works had just been published by this industrious religious—viz., *The Perfect Religious*, known and valued in almost every religious community, and the *Exhortations on the Vows*, delivered by the Abbé Asselin to the Carmelite nuns of St. Denis, Paris, when they were governed by the Princess Louise, to whom the work is dedicated. Both are well translated—the latter especially so. The elegant French of Monsieur Asselin is rendered into such clear, concise, and vigorous English that it would seem as though the accomplished translator had the advantage of Mother McAuley's assistance, and that the work owes some of its chaste beauty to her careful revision. The holy foundress,

\* Now Lord Justice of Appeal.

though there was not the slightest suspicion of "the blue" about her, gave much encouragement to the literary tastes of her children, and the amount of translating, transcribing, and composing done by the earlier members was something marvellous when viewed in connection with their other labors. In this way much of the spiritual reading of the first houses was supplied.\* There were few spiritual books in English fifty years ago, and if they had not been supplemented by translations the Sisters who could read only one language would have had but little variety of spiritual reading for the instruction and recreation of their minds. Music, drawing, and illumination were also assiduously cultivated, as was needlework, plain and ornamental. From the beginning it has been customary for the Sisters to work at sewing, drawing, printing, copying music, etc., or something else that occupied the fingers and left the mind partially free, during the half-hour devoted to spiritual reading in common every morning, and the same space allotted to the lives of saints or other holy persons every evening; also, though not with such close application, during the two hours out of the twenty-four given to recreation. And in this way an immense amount of work was gradually accomplished. Mother McAuley wished that each Sister should always have some piece of work, literary or industrial, on hand, so that, as the Rule requires, "whatever time they have to spare from the functions of the Institute they shall diligently employ in manual work or such other spiritual or corporal occupation as the mother-superior shall appoint."

The fact that Mother McAuley had just published *Cottage Controversy*, and that the translations of Sister M. Vincent

\* The Sisters of Mercy have continued to this day to supply the community with useful works to a greater extent, perhaps, than any other order of *religieuses*. These are chiefly educational, catechetical, ascetic, and biographical, as the fine *Catechism of Scripture History*, by the Sisters of Mercy, Limerick (republished in Baltimore); the smaller catechism of the same, by the Sisters of Mercy, Downpatrick; the series of "Reading-books for the Children of the Church," entitled *God in His Works*, and seve-

Deasy and the third volume of *Geraldine* had issued from the Cork Convent of Mercy almost simultaneously, explains the playful remarks of Mother McAuley about "dedication" and "authorship" in the letter quoted on page 238. It was by utilizing odds and ends of time, before this exercise or after that, that our industrious translator\* accomplished so much; for she was generally so fully occupied in instructing the poor and visiting the sick that it was with difficulty she could steal one hour a day to devote to the pension-school, in compliance with the wish of the foundress.

In the third volume of *Geraldine* there is a pretty picture of the Cork pension-school—names, of course, being fictitious—which will interest Sisters of to-day, as exemplifying the regulations Mother McAuley made in schools of this class for teaching the children how to examine their conscience, as the Rule prescribes :

" 'The children are just preparing for the examination of conscience,' said the presiding Sister to a visitor; ' perhaps you would rather see the school at some other time? '

" 'No, indeed!' said the visitor, who was not a Catholic: ' I know enough of the usual routine of schools. I would rather see something new; and I do not understand what you mean by this public examination of conscience, unless

ral other books by the Sisters of Mercy, Kinsale; the *Meditations*, etc., by the Sisters of Mercy, Coventry, England; the *Memoir of Rev. Mother McAuley*, by Mother M. V. Hartnett, Convent of Mercy, Roscommon; the beautiful *Meditations for a Retreat*, by S. M. Juliana Purcell, Convent of Mercy, Providence, R. I.; *Lectures on Spiritual Subjects*, compiled by a Sister of Mercy, England; translations of several useful works from the French, German, Spanish, and Italian languages; lives of saints and other holy persons; story-books for children, etc., etc.; historical dramas for schools etc., etc.; simple dialogues for little girls, etc.—almost all of which are found invaluable in convents and schools, as well as in many pious families. In French-speaking districts the Sisters of Mercy have published some useful works in French, and translated several from English, etc., into that language.

\* Mother McAuley wished the Sisters who knew any foreign languages to practise speaking them occasionally, so that they might be able to instruct foreign sailors and others, whom they often met in the hospitals and prisons, in their respective native tongue, thereby bringing down upon themselves the blessings promised by St. Columba to those who are kind to the wayfarer and the stranger.

it be like the Methodist manifestation, or experience, of their spiritual state.'

"At the top of the room was raised a seat, in which was the presiding Sister, who, on the signal, arose and gave out the short prayer that follows :

"‘My God ! I adore Thee ; I love Thee ; I return Thee thanks for all Thy benefits. Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten my mind, that I may discover all the faults whereby I have offended my heavenly Father.’

"Sister M. Ursula then read, in a distinct and impressive manner, the heads of the examen of conscience for that day :

"‘God created me for His glory, to know, to love, and to serve Him in this life, and to be happy with Him for ever in the next.

"‘Do I give glory to God ? Could He look on me now and say, “I rejoice that I created that child ; she takes pains to serve me faithfully ” ? Let each ask herself this question.’

"The question was then repeated in the same manner, after which there was a pause ; and the visitor's searching eye was directed to the upper classes, where the demeanor led her to hope, notwithstanding the sudden entrance of a stranger, that the solemn question was receiving an answer from the heart of each.

"After the pause had continued a few minutes the Sister continued : ‘Do I endeavor to know God by learning what He has taught, which is contained in my catechism, and which He requires me to know and practise ? Let each one ask herself this question.’ Another pause.

"‘Do I love God ? Should I be unhappy if I thought He were angry with me ? and if I displeased Him should I do all in my power to be forgiven ?’ A pause. ‘Do I say my prayers night and morning ? Do I go to Mass every Sunday and holiday ? Do I go regularly to confession ? Do I hate sin ? Do I attend to all my religious duties ?’

“During the pause which succeeded the recollection of the elder girls continued apparently rapt, to the visitor’s admiration, and she felt no inclination to be severe towards a row of laughing eyes which peeped at her through fat and rosy fingers from the little class near her.

“After the last pause, which was devoted to the predominant passion, the Sister gave the signal to kneel, and said, in the name of each child: ‘For these and all the sins of my life I am heartily sorry; I humbly beg pardon for them through the merits of my divine Saviour, and I resolve, with the grace of God, not to be guilty of them any more.’ Then followed the Angelus and the noon-day recess.”

Although a good part of the Sisters’ time was devoted to this interesting school, both in teaching its classes and in preparing to teach them, yet their main work was with the lower stratum of society, and this made it peculiarly incumbent on them to adopt the means necessary to preserve the lady-like refinement of manners and ideas which they had brought from their home circles, and which, judging from her letters and instructions, Mother McAuley valued more highly than any other originator of a religious Institute. She required the Sisters to cultivate any accomplishment they happened to possess; and so anxious was she that their evening hours should be cheered by music that a piano was placed in every house she founded, even when more essentially useful articles were wanting; and it was not her fault if it were the only musical instrument in the community, for she thought its notes sounded all the better when blended with the rich accompaniment of the harp. A good organ for the chapel she also deemed an essential, and the organist and the choir-regulator were very important officials in her eyes.

Whether Mother McAuley adopted some of these ideas from her great friend Father Robert St. Leger,\* S.J., or he

\* Two Jesuits of this name, Fathers Robert and John, bore a high reputation for sanctity in and about Dublin in Mother McAuley’s time. Their sister, Mary Austin

from her, or whether they were original in both, cannot now be ascertained; but a letter of his to the superioress of a kindred institution accurately explains her sentiments as well as his:

“But of all Orders in the Church, you, I think, stand most in need of persons formed by education and habit, as well as by virtue, to the strictest delicacy of sentiment, and this alone can (of human means) prevent you from contracting a certain grossness of idea from the scenes you daily witness.”

Like Mother Clare, Sister M. Vincent Deasy was selected for the English mission. Professed in July, 1837, she was sent, in 1843, to assist in establishing the Institute at Sunderland, Durham, and, having labored there about sixteen years, she came home, in 1859, “a very sweet old lady,” writes my informant, and died at St. Marie’s of the Isle, Cork, September 2, 1878.

The divine blessing has attended the Sisters of Mercy in Cork from the beginning, and their progress has been marvellous. Though more than decimated at various times by famine fever, cholera, small-pox, and consumption, they have increased numerically, and in their case, as in so many similar ones, the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the faithful. The House of Mercy specially designed for poor young women of good character is always filled to its utmost capacity. Here girls are trained as laundresses, cooks, seamstresses, and nursery governesses. As the Rule says, “They shall not be encouraged to remain long in the House of Mercy, as in general it will be better for

St. Leger, died in the odor of sanctity at the Presentation convent, Rahin, diocese of Meath, in 1824—a convent which Father Robert did much to foster and consolidate. He was present in Rome, 1814, at the splendid functions which celebrated the restoration of the society. He went on the Indian mission, 1834, and Mother McAuley had passed from earth before he returned to Ireland.

Mother McAuley sometimes repeated a useful advice Father Robert gave her in the early days of St. Mary’s, to this effect: Don’t multiply officials [subordinate superiors], but let those you have be so much of one mind with you that they will never openly express a different judgment from yours, not even if you said black was white.

them soon to enter on that state and employment by which they are to live," each inmate is required to accept a situation as soon as a suitable one can be procured. Besides manual work they are taught to read, write, and make up accounts. Except in extraordinary cases—and genius, like murder, will out—Mother McAuley was no advocate for over-educating, so as to unfit them for their state in life, women who, whether as servants of rich men or wives of poor men, have to earn their bread by the labor of their hands. A new House of Mercy was opened in 1863. Mr. Dan Nicholas Murphy expressed a wish on his death-bed that his money should be applied to the erection of a House of Mercy, and his brother, Mr. John Nicholas Murphy, of Clifden, nobly fulfilled his wish.

In the Orphanage from ninety to a hundred children are sheltered. "It would be difficult," writes Mr. Murphy,\* "to meet an equal number of little girls of their class so neatly and comfortably clad, and appearing so healthy and happy." The children's infirmary is a marvel of neatness and comfort, and it speaks well for the institution that it is but rarely occupied.

The MERCY HOSPITAL,† once the Mansion House, and more recently the Vincentian College, was opened March 17, 1857. Though chiefly for the poor, it has some pay wards and private rooms, of which many respectable persons employed in the city, but at a distance from their families, gladly avail themselves when ill. The most eminent surgeons and physicians in Cork give their services gratuitously to this useful institution, as to every other conducted by the Sisters of Mercy.

\* *In Terra Incognita.*

† It was in the MERCY HOSPITAL, Cork, that the chastened spirit of the seraphic Ellen Downing passed from earth. This exquisite poetess, better known as "Mary" of the *Nation*, and, later, "Mary Alphonsus," should be known wherever the English language is spoken by her "Voices from the Heart" and her "Poems for Children." We feel that we do a good work in endeavoring to multiply the readers of this genuine sacred poetry, so well calculated to delight and instruct pious souls.

In the pension schools, the poor-schools, the industrial, the infant-schools, the House of Mercy, the public institutions, etc., the pupils of the Sisters of Mercy in Cork may be counted by thousands.

In 1871 the Sisters of Mercy, at the request of the guardians of the Cork Union, who prepared a small convent for their accommodation, took charge of the Workhouse Hospital and its eight hundred patients. Early in the next year there was a sudden and terrible outbreak of small-pox, and a hospital was at once set apart for that most loathsome disease. The Sisters of Mercy immediately volunteered their services, and when entering upon their duties they were accompanied by the bishop, Most Rev. Dr. Delany, who, like another Borromeo, went to the bedside of each of his stricken children, consoling all in the most touching accents of charity, and cheering them with the good news that they were now placed under the care of the Sisters of Mercy. On the 21st of May, 1872, one of the Sisters fell a victim to the horrible epidemic. The sleeplessness which accompanies the more virulent forms of small-pox, making it the most dreadful as well as the most hideous of diseases, was the worst feature of the case of this sweet, holy young Sister. From the first moment of her illness she never closed her eyes in sleep till she closed them to rest in the bosom of her Father in heaven.

A marble slab was erected by the guardians of the hospital in the workhouse chapel, commemorative of the heroism of this generous servant of the plague-stricken.—R.I.P.

A touching tribute to the martyr of charity appeared in the local journal, May 22, 1872 :

“With deep sorrow and sympathy the public will learn of the death of Sister M. Ignatius Crolly, of the Order of Mercy, who died yesterday morning at the workhouse, a martyr to her devotion to the sick and suffering from small-pox in the hospital of the institution. She was one of the nuns to whom was recently entrusted the care of the hos-

pital, and who, when the epidemic broke out, volunteered for the perilous service of nursing the small-pox patients. Our readers have been already made aware of the marvellous transformation wrought in that part of the institution by the ministrations of these noble women. Everything changed as if by magic under their hands, and the wards were converted, so far as it was possible for human agency to effect it, into a perfect place of solace for the sick. In the discharge of this duty Sister M. Ignatius contracted the disease in its most malignant form, and from the period she was first attacked little hope was entertained of her recovery. Her illness was of a fearful character, as may be understood from the fact that she passed six days and six nights without sleep before the last sad rest came that terminated her mortal agony. These pangs were borne without a murmur. Suffering seemed only to educe the noblest spirit of resignation. Sick and dying, she was borne up by the consolations of religion, and at last meekly committed her pure spirit to the hands of the Maker whom she had so devotedly and unflinchingly served."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### MOTHER JOSEPHINE WARDE.

Orphanage for Children of gentle Birth—Munificence of Mr. and Mrs. Murphy, of Clifden—Description of the Asylum—The Chapel, the Gem of the House—The Dedication—Sermon by Father Tom Burke, O.P.—Remarks from the Cork *Examiner*—Early Days of Sarah Warde—Her Father's Death—Her Efforts to regain his Fortune—A sad Incident—The Shock it occasioned—Vocations—From the World to the Cloister—Mother Josephine's Gift of Sympathy—Extracts—Character of Mother Josephine—Her Death—Her Works: “Blessed are they that saw thee and shared thy friendship.”

A NOTHER good work has recently been added to the duties of the Sisters of Mercy, Cork—namely, an Orphanage for children of gentle birth, the idea of which originated with Mr. and Mrs. John Nicholas Murphy, of Clifden, Cork. The execution of this splendid design was the last great work accomplished by Mother Josephine.

The Asylum was built and endowed solely by Mr. Murphy at an expense that must be counted by tens of thousands, making full provision for fifty orphans, even to furnishing them with their trousseaux and some means to begin life when, having completed their education, they leave the institution. It is also designed by the munificent founder as a temporary retreat for Sisters of Mercy worn out in God's service; and in this aspect Mr. Murphy's is one of the most touching and graceful acts of charity ever done to a religious community. The objects of his benevolence are the children of the rich who are no longer rich, and the poor of Jesus Christ who have renounced or despised riches for His sake. A condensed description of

this unique establishment will not be without interest to the reader :

This institution is at once an orphanage for girls of the upper class, in which they will be comfortably maintained and receive a superior education, and a conventual establishment for the Sisters of Mercy, who were selected by the founder to carry out his charitable views. Occupying the most salubrious and delightful position in the neighbourhood of the city, it is intended to serve as a sanatarium for such Sisters of the Order in Cork as may need change of air after the toilsome and trying round of duties which their sacred profession imposes, and under which mind and body are often wont to succumb. Situated on the Wellington Road, it overlooks the city, and adorns, with the loveliest architectural creation in Cork, one of its fairest suburbs. A truly princely gift, springing from the most exalted Christian motive.

The style is a free treatment of the Gothic architecture of the thirteenth century, with, however, large windows and every concession which common sense and the advanced acquaintance of the age with the requirements of health demand. Spreading out a façade to the south of one hundred and thirty-four feet, it presents all the principal apartments to the combined advantage of sun and view. The ground floor contains school-rooms, refectories, parlors, etc., all united by a noble corridor or cloister seven feet six inches wide by a total length of one hundred and forty-six feet, terminated by staircases, thus ensuring perfect circulation and easy access to every part of the building. On the upper floor are the quarters of the religious ladies, so arranged as to secure perfect privacy and quiet. In the centre of this floor, and forming, as it were, the heart of the establishment, directly over the porch and entrance-hall, is the chapel, an elegant and commodious oratory. The upper story is devoted to vast, airy dormitories, etc.

The apsidal termination of the chapel, with its group of

elegant traceried windows, gives a stamp of religious character to the whole building, its graceful and lofty spirelet, springing heavenward from the intersection of the roof, being visible from almost every part of the city. Immediately over the hall door, in a niche supported by corbels of angels, is a group representing St. Vincent de Paul with two little girls standing beside him and looking trustfully into his face, and a third child in his arms, thus setting forth the object and intent of the building and of its generous founders. The edifice has been most substantially and elegantly built of native red sandstone, relieved by bands and dressings of limestone—a most ornate and effective combination. Separated from the public road by an exceedingly handsome wrought-iron railing and a series of cut-stone piers, the former displaying in the centre of each panel the monogram of the institution, a beautiful grassy slope with carriage-drive is ascended till the broad terrace is reached whereon stands the elegant and substantial building. Nothing could be more pleasant to the eye than the charming façade, with its many handsome windows piercing its smooth, finely-cut walls, flanked by pretty turrets, and its grand central porch, surmounted by its tapering *flèche*, crowning with the cross an establishment not unworthy to flourish in its reflecting glory. The sculptured group over the main entrance is really a fine specimen of art, and attracted a good deal of attention when on exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1875.

The chapel, immediately over the vestibule, is flanked on either side by choir and sacristy, but separated from them by beautifully-carved screens of elegant design. Three splendid windows with traceried heads, and filled with toned and colored glass, light the semi-hexagonal apse in which the altar is placed; other beautiful windows pierce the side-walls of the chapel beyond the choir-screens, and a beautiful groined ceiling crowns the whole. The gem of the interior is the altar, light and graceful in design, and

enriched with fine carvings and several panels containing paintings of sacred subjects. The principal of these is a large painting occupying the frontal of the altar and representing Christ blessing little children. There are two painted panels in the reredos, representing respectively the Blessed Virgin as a child taught by her mother, St. Anne, and St. Vincent and the little children. These exquisite pictures are painted on slate by Westlake. Not the least beautiful feature of the interior is the tessellated pavement.

The opening of this superb and unique institution was a source of the purest delight to the benevolent heart of good Mother Josephine, as it provided for a class of children the most hapless of all orphans, though most unaccountably forgotten or neglected by many who contribute largely to other works of mercy.

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16, 1877, the above institution was blessed, dedicated, and solemnly opened. "The scene in the corridors pending the celebration was most interesting. Ecclesiastical dignitaries in their distinctive robes, heads of religious houses in habits of mediæval holiness, surpliced priests, the holy Sisters of Mercy in their picturesque and all-unworldly vesture, and the little orphans (the first *beneficiaries* of this glorious foundation) flitting about in dresses of empyreal blue, adorned with the medal of Children of Mary, and the throng of guests representing the first Catholic society in Cork—all these made the noble building pulsate, as it were, for the first time, with the life-blood of its new and beautiful existence."

Most Rev. Dr. Delany was celebrant at the solemn High Mass; Very Rev. Dean Neville and Very Rev. Precentor Sheehan were respectively deacon and subdeacon. Many of the most prominent clergy of Ireland were present. Very Rev. Thomas N. Burke, the great Dominican orator, preached the dedication sermon with even more than his usual fire and eloquence.

During the *déjeuner* which followed this touching celebration a telegram arrived from Rome conveying the blessing of the Holy Father, given "with effusion of heart" to Mr. Murphy and his family, and to all who assisted at the solemn opening of the Orphanage founded by him.

Among other things the benevolent founder said on this occasion: "The next favorable circumstance I would refer to is one which has mainly suggested the undertaking, and one without which I should never have entered on the work —namely, that the institution is to be administered by a community of religious women. . . . Of the excellent Sisters of Mercy, who now for forty years have been diffusing inestimable blessings in this city, and who have kindly undertaken this Orphanage, I shall only observe that well indeed has an English Protestant writer, Sir John Forbes, who visited their establishments in Ireland, spoken of them as 'those noble Sisters of Mercy,' and described their convents as so many perennial fountains of good to their respective neighborhoods."

The *Examiner*, to which we are indebted for much of the above, says:

"This sacred and beautiful event is without parallel in the modern annals of the province, as an example of individual munificence directed to the accomplishment of one of the most noble of Christian undertakings. A favorite form of Catholic charity, because most Godlike in its spirit and operation, and amongst those specially selected for commendation by the divine Teacher and Exemplar of mankind, is the succor and support of the orphan; and amongst our charitable institutions the orphanage always holds a foremost and honored place. But the objects of its benevolence are nearly always the children of the poor. The orphanhood of the child born and reared in poverty is justly esteemed a most touching and potent occasion for the exercise of charity. But it has occurred to the thoughtful and compassionate heart of Mr. Murphy, whose name

and deeds reflect lustre on our Catholic city, that there is a yet more pitiable and sorrowful phase of this sad condition of childhood—namely, the orphanhood of the child born amidst plenty, nurtured for a few years, perhaps, in luxury, and, according to all human probability, destined to occupy the upper stratum of society. To this child of gentle birth and tender rearing the loss at once of parental care and the means of subsistence is a calamity the most overwhelming, perhaps, the human mind can contemplate; and great in proportion is the necessity for, and the merit of, the charity which steps in to avert, as far as possible, the terrible consequences to which this bereavement exposes the child. Mr. Murphy, having grasped this beautiful and affecting idea, which he shared with his most amiable and Christian wife, determined that it should bear fruit in practical application, and the outcome is a work the most generous in conception and the most inspiring and perfect in accomplishment, even amongst the many examples of Christian charity of which our community have been edified witnesses for years."

Forty-four years ago, amid the struggles and crosses and disappointments of the weak beginnings of her Institute in that gloomy, dusty thoroughfare—used as such as little as possible—Rutland Street, the venerated foundress gave expression to a hope which then seemed preposterous, that the Cork establishment would not be excelled by any in the Order, and to the wish that it might even excel the poor old mother-house. Her hopes and wishes have proved singularly prophetic. For its resources and opportunities the Cork house equals any in the Order, and in the possession of the institution just described it excels even the far-famed parent house, erected by her zeal and so long blessed by her presence.

We may fittingly close our account of the community established in Cork by Mother McAuley in July, 1837, with a glance at the zealous and venerable woman who labored

unremittingly for nearly forty-three years to promote its interests for God and for souls.

Sarah and Frances Warde were among the most remarkable women who joined the Institute in the first decade of its existence. Their father, John Warde, Esq., of Belbrook House, Queen's County, married, towards the close of the last century, Miss Maher, of Kilkenny, and their union was blessed with a numerous family. They were in flourishing circumstances—no doubt by the connivance of some kind Protestant friend—till a nobleman whose estate was contiguous mentally selected Belbrook House as an excellent location for a college which some Englishman wished to open, in the hope that the beauty of the situation and the salubrity of the climate in this sweet, pastoral country would attract pupils from all parts of Ireland and extensively from England.

Mr. Warde was in deep grief at this time, owing to the death of his wife shortly after the birth of their youngest child, Fanny, and his property easily reverted to the man who coveted it. This was not his only cross. A little after his removal to Dublin his second son, a youth of extraordinary promise, died, at Maynooth, I think, on the very day appointed for his ordination; and his second daughter, Helen, a lovely girl of eighteen, was attacked by consumption, which soon proved fatal. The father did not long survive these calamities. Being invited to meet the poet Moore at the residence of Mr. Robert Cassidy, of Monasterevan, a celebrity of the day, he was stricken with mortal illness a few hours after the dinner, and died the following night. A kind maternal aunt took charge of the children. John, the only surviving son, went to England, where he married; he died there in 1839, leaving a widow and four children, who finally settled in Pennsylvania. The eldest daughter, Mary, became a Sister of Mercy, and is still living at St. Marie's of the Isle; Jane, the second, married; Fanny, the third, died of consumption. The

son, also John, married in Pittsburgh; his wife, "Mrs. M. M. Warde," was well known for some years in periodical literature; both died recently, leaving a fair boy and a fairer girl, the last of the race.

Fanny Warde became acquainted with Mother McAuley in June, 1828, through her niece, Mary Teresa, and joined the Institute soon after. Sarah remained with her aunt and was very earnest in her endeavors to regain her father's property. She consulted Mother McAuley, who, after giving the subject a good deal of consideration, assured her that the deeds executed between her father and the so-called purchasers of his estate were—I know not why—legally worthless. "If they are honest," she said, "they will pay the heirs; if not—" She remarked of Mr. Warde, who was a man of great piety, that if he had known as much about earthly things as he did about the things of heaven he would never have signed such papers.

But Sarah Warde was not a girl to become penniless without a struggle. Determined to try the effect of a personal appeal, she went with her brother to the country to see whether her father's property or some portion of its value could be recovered. The purchasers denied being in any way indebted to the Wardes, spoke of their friendship for the late Mr. Warde and his most interesting family, and offered to place the children in a first-class Protestant academy. This was, of course, indignantly rejected, and the young Wardes were spoken of at several evangelical tea-parties as people who wilfully closed their eyes to the Gospel light and refused to be "savingly converted."

Sarah undertook another journey for the same purpose and with similar results. Her mind was at this time balanced between the world and the cloister, and when in Dublin she had visited several convents, but could not make up her mind to enter any. She used in after-life to describe her first visit to a convent; it was the Presentation convent, Kilkenny, and Bishop Kinsella introduced

her. "The nuns must have been at meditation," said she, "for they knelt in their stalls, leaning forward, and so motionless that I imagined no one was present and that the black habits and veils hanging so gracefully over the stalls had been placed there for effect."\*

Sarah Warde was at that time a tall, dashing girl, less distinguished for beauty of countenance than for grace of mien, most amiable in manner and disposition, and not at all reconciled to the reverses that had come upon her family. While in the country a gentleman who had long professed an ardent attachment for her renewed his suit with the permission of her uncle, Mr. William Maher, in whose family she was then residing. One evening the suitor came to dinner, and as the party strolled about the lawn before tea the host and hostess contrived that the young people should be left to themselves, anxious that their friend should have an answer before their niece, whose return was fixed for next day, left them. Later in the evening she informed them that she had met his overtures with the kindest but firmest refusal, and that, unless he was satisfied to meet her as a friend and consider her words final, she must positively decline to meet him again—a decision highly displeasing to her interested friends, who thought Mr. M——'s proposal an excellent expedient to repair her shattered fortunes.

But it was still more displeasing to Mr. M——, who, not trusting himself to speak, had instantly called for his horse, and, leaving some excuse for the hostess, dashed off at a speed that alarmed the grooms. It was a mellow autumn evening, but a sudden storm came on, and servants were despatched to entreat him to return and remain all night, or at least till its cessation. But he heeded them not. On

\* There is a story somewhat similar of a good country girl who entered the novitiate to be trained as a lay Sister. On going to the chapel next morning she saw the nuns at meditation, and, after surveying them with a surprised air for some moments, she innocently exclaimed: "Well, while the nuns are sitting there doing nothing I believe I'll go clean up the kitchen."

he rode, careless of the booming thunder and the lurid lightning. The rain, which descended in torrents, must have blinded him : he dashed into a lake on his right, and horse and rider were found in its surging waters next day.

The news of this sad accident was a dreadful shock to the poor young girl ; she held herself in some manner accessory to the death of one who had been as faithful to her when she had lost everything as when her prospects were at their brightest. On her return to Dublin she obtained some relief by opening her whole heart to Mother McAuley, who assured her she could not have done the unfortunate gentleman any injustice in refusing him, since she had never given him any encouragement.

Sarah Warde wavered no longer between the world and the convent, and as soon as family ties left her free she offered herself as a candidate for the new Institute. Mother McAuley, after testing her vocation in every necessary way, received her as a postulant in the summer of 1833. From that moment all the ardor and impetuosity of a strongly-marked character were placed under the guidance of grace ; but she retained through life an extraordinary affectionateness of disposition, a keen appreciation of the joys of friendship, a sort of gratitude to those who loved and revered her and carried out her views, from which might be inferred how keenly a woman of her fine and tender sensibilities must have suffered in earlier days.\* Her position and her unusual gift of sympathy often made her the recipient of strange confidences, and none ever re-

\* Mother Josephine was not destitute of humor, but she rather enjoyed the gayety of others than made fun herself. If during the recreation hours she happened to see any fun going on she would call one of the merry group and have the pleasant affair described to herself and those near her, so that all might enjoy it. She enjoyed very much the society of Sisters who could give a pleasant, humorous turn to conversation and describe incidents wittily. And a *mot* pleased her so much that even a delinquent who could make a laughable one got off very easily. The least pleasantry amused her ; and it was a pleasure to see her amused, she laughed so heartily, though her laughter, like her speaking voice, was barely audible, even when she was so convulsed with laughter that the tears streamed down her face.

pented confiding in her. Mother Josephine was emphatically such a person as we describe by the word *sensible*, but she carried the sweetness, and even playfulness, of youth into a green and beautiful old age.

There was a deep tenderness in Mother McAuley's affection for Mother Josephine, such as we are wont to feel for those who have suffered keenly and confided their griefs to us; for nothing engenders love like confidence. This explains several passages in the early letters of both.

Those who knew Mother Josephine in the latter half of her life were often surprised at the sensibility she manifested on being obliged to part with any of her Sisters by death or for foundations. The mere mention of their names was sometimes enough to evoke a passionate burst of sorrow, and the young people about her were hushed into silence as the tears suffused her venerable countenance, and felt that awe which youth so often experiences in presence of sorrowing age. "Oh! what a heart that woman has," exclaimed a young postulant who happened to enter St. Marie's of the Isle just as a dear Sister left it for heaven. "She weeps over Sister Mary A—— as if she had never lost a child before." And so she did. The heart of the woman of seventy was as true and tender and affectionate as that of the girl of seventeen, though not a fibre in it vibrated save in accordance with the sweet will of God.

A few extracts from Mother McAuley's letters referring to Mother Josephine will be found interesting:

"I had a note from our dear Sister M. Josephine; she always writes such satisfactory notes. Dr. Murphy [the bishop] likes her very much. I hope you hear from her sometimes. Each of her letters to me is more expressive of gratitude and affection than the former. This is consoling, as it shows that her happiness is evidently increasing, thank God!" (June 16, 1838.)

"Enclosed is a note from Mother M. Josephine which

will gratify you, as it did me. I hear great accounts of her prudence and nice, regular example. I saw all that is amiable in her character—she has given me great comfort." (August, 1837.)

"I had a long letter from Sister M. Josephine. She says: 'Sister M. Frances Mahony is in deep decline; only for this we should be too happy. Our House of Mercy is opened; all our debts are paid, though the addition cost five hundred pounds. The day we commenced our dear bishop gave us fifty pounds. He is delighted to see the young women protected. I almost think this [the House of Mercy] is the best branch of our Institute.'" (January 30, 1840.)

Mother Josephine had the great happiness of working in her holy vocation till the close of her long life. She spent the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1879, and the following day, December 9, which was the forty-fourth anniversary of her holy profession, with great devotion and spiritual joy. On the 10th and 11th she was at Mass and Holy Communion, and attended to her duties as usual. On the evening of the 11th she felt slightly ill, though she remained at recreation till nine. After retiring she grew worse, and next morning, DECEMBER 12, the forty-eighth anniversary of the foundation of the Order, it was deemed prudent to have Extreme Unction administered, which was done by Father Scannell, a life-long friend. During the day she often seemed to lose consciousness, and in the intervals she spoke but little. Once she desired the Sisters who attended her to tell all her dear children to be very fervent in their holy state, and she frequently repeated beautiful aspirations, chiefly from the Psalms,\* to which she had always been greatly devoted. It was an affliction to the Sisters that, on account of her symptoms, the Holy

\* Mother Josephine was often heard to say that she found great comfort and support in the Psalms. To her the Psalter was ever luminous and always suited to her spiritual needs and experiences. "I could not," said she on one occasion, "have persevered in an Order where the Office is not recited every day."

Viaticum could not be administered, and they earnestly besought Our Lady of Mercy and St. Joseph to obtain for their faithful client a happiness she so eagerly coveted.

God was pleased to hear their prayer, and their beloved mother was able to receive our Lord in the Sacrament of His love at about nine A.M. on the Octave of the Immaculate Conception. Sweetly and peacefully her gentle spirit passed to its Father's keeping at about two o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, December 15, 1879.

“For some time,” writes one\* of her spiritual children, “the Sisters remarked that she was getting more and more detached from earthly things. Of her death several occurrences, which we failed to observe at the time, have since shown that she may have had a presentiment. Her sweet spirit of charity will, I am sure, be long remembered by her Sisters, whom she loved so well, and who deeply lament her loss. You would hardly have recognized her after death—she looked so young, and almost handsome. There was a slight color on her cheeks for long after. You will, I know, get all the prayers you can for our darling mother.”

Mother Josephine was as particular about the manners of the Sisters as the holy foundress herself. “Do all you can,” she would say, “to please, gratify, and oblige your Sisters. Our first and best charity is due to those with whom we live. Make your Sisters as happy as possible; sacrifice your own views and humors continually for this end. Remember they cannot go outside to seek their society; and as they cannot find happiness except within the walls, each should do all in her power to render our mutual intercourse pleasant and delightful.” Mother Josephine has been known to speak most severely to a Sister who closed some shutters so noisily as to disturb, perhaps, the occupant of a neighboring cell. The smallest defect in good breeding was positively painful to this perfect gentlewoman. To a worthy candidate who was not suffi-

\* S. M. Dominica C—.

ciently careful for the feelings and accommodation of others, and who, in lamenting her deficiencies, said : "I know I require more piety"—"Yes," retorted Mother Josephine very gently, "and more *polish*."

In Mother Josephine's appearance there was little to attract admiration, save that her countenance seemed at times informed and illuminated by the light of holiness. In manner she was most kindly and sympathetic, and in the transaction of business she showed great administrative ability. Her education was rather solid than brilliant, and her prudence and gentleness won the hearts of all who had close relations with her, to an extent that surprised those who knew her but slightly. Her keen appreciation of ability in her subjects, and the discrimination with which she employed it in its most fitting sphere, might be envied by many a more famous executive.

These qualities were eminently displayed in her choice of superiors for new houses, for the novitiate, the schools, and other departments. Experience proved the judiciousness of every appointment she made, and her governing powers were great. Regarding herself and her works as a mere spectator, the writer never knew her to make a mistake, or commit an imprudence, or decide anything of consequence without counsel, reflection, and prayer. Though in no sense a brilliant woman, and perhaps even rather poorly dowered with gifts of intellect in comparison with many of the other noble women whom the foundress gathered around her in rigid monastic discipline, yet none of that bright galaxy shone with a clearer or more steady light ; none was more eager to initiate good works and foster the good works initiated by others ; and no woman of the age, no matter of what intellectual calibre, has seen more of her great conceptions become realities, or given more stability to the benevolence of her heart. And if this be not genius it is its equivalent or something higher. Verily, the works of this noble woman remain to praise her

in the gate. The rich, the poor, the sick, the blind, the dumb, the little children, the prisoners—all were benefited through her zeal. She originated the “Young Economists of the Infant Jesus,” composed of young ladies of rank who engaged to make with their own hands warm clothing for poor little ones, the material being procured by themselves with savings from their own pocket-money, thus giving them a practical lesson in genuine almsgiving, which always entails some privation or self-denial on the donors.

Her sister, Mother Frances Warde, founded the Order of Mercy in the United States (Pittsburgh, 1843), and Mother Josephine always cherished a lively zeal for the Catholic youth of this country. It was in a great measure owing to the large number of subjects sent out by her that her sister, now of Manchester, N. H., was able to found, directly or indirectly, nearly forty convents, chiefly in the Eastern and Middle States.

One pet project of hers Mother Josephine was not permitted to realize : the founding of a Ladies’ College somewhat analogous to the Missionary College, All-Hallows, Dublin, in which postulants who showed a vocation for the foreign mission might be trained for convents in the colonies and in America.

When Very Rev. Dr. Manning (now cardinal), the acknowledged agent of the British War Office for procuring Catholic attendance for the sick and wounded soldiers of the Crimean army in 1854, applied to the principal Convents of Mercy to aid them, Mother Josephine was one of the first to offer a contingent ; and her Sisters, with those of other houses of the Order, did such service in the hospitals of Scutari and Koulilee, and on the heights of Bala-klava, that not a Catholic in their keeping died without the sacraments, and numbers of non-Catholics were added to the true fold.

Most Rev. Dr. Delany and fifty priests assisted at the obsequies of this dear and venerable mother in the exqui-

site chapel of St. Marie's of the Isle, which, planned and erected through her zeal, may well be regarded as her monument. Her "Month's Mind" was equally well attended, and her anniversary Mass showed how affectionately she was still remembered. So deeply was she revered and beloved by the clergy that within the first year after her precious death five hundred and sixty Masses were offered for her soul's weal. Mother Josephine used to say, "A Sister of Mercy should not go to heaven alone." Her hands were full, indeed, when she was summoned to meet the heavenly Bridegroom and enter the portals of rest. One does not like to think of such a soul "having to go to prison in the bridal hour." But, lest the all-holy eye of Him who will *judge justices, and search even Jerusalem*—the faithful soul—with lamps, should have discovered in her some stains invisible to those who love her, let us pray for this truly valiant woman, and in return she will gratefully remember us before our Father who is in heaven.

When not engaged in the parlor or overseeing the duties Mother Josephine usually sat at her desk in the community-room, and would look up with such a pleasant smile from her desk or her sewing to greet the Sisters as they entered after the day's labor that they felt there was a something wanting to the fulness of the day whenever she happened to be absent. One of these, who still mourns her loss, writes: "Even if dear Mother Josephine never did anything but walk through the convent, her very look was a sermon—so dignified, so religious, so sweet and benign; and then the cordial welcome that beamed from her mild, sweet countenance when she met us coming in from our duties, so that, no matter how tired or weary we might be, it refreshed us to get her kind, motherly look and word. She was the soul of honor and the living copy of our holy Rule. She was never without the cross; and yet no one would ever know what she was suffering, it was

so hidden. Her meekness, patience, and mercy were inexhaustible."

The life of this holy woman, so glorious to God and so edifying to men, should still be powerful as an example. Mother Josephine strove to become perfect by performing uncommonly well the common duties of every day, and in this we can all imitate her, for her life presented nothing extraordinary, save, perhaps, her fidelity in lovingly accepting God's will as it was manifested, and doing as well as possible the duty that lay next at hand. As superior she was eminent in every virtue, especially meekness, zeal, and charity. As to sweetness of disposition, it used to be said of her that she was a feminine St. Francis de Sales. But *out of the strong came forth that sweetness.* There was nothing enervating about it. Hers was not the honey of which the proverb speaks : "Don't make yourself all honey, lest the flies might devour you." She was a strict disciplinarian, but enforced the rules with all possible mildness. During the forty-six years of her religious life she trained thousands in the practices of Christian and religious perfection, but she ever sought to make the yoke of the Lord sweet and His burden light to His children, and it is scarcely too much to say that no case of distress, mental or physical, ever went unconsoled or unrelieved from her presence.

"Blessed are they that saw thee and were honored with thy friendship!" These words of inspiration are a solace to the writer, whose early years in the convent were guided by this gentle mother, strong and sweet in her teachings. And every member of the Institute in which this *Sarah* spent almost half a century, laboring to redeem want and remove ignorance with unfailing sweetness and an energy that never flagged, may well address her in the language of Holy Scripture : *O Lady, our Sarai ! we know that thou art beautiful ; say, then, that thou art our Sister, that for thy sake the King may be merciful to us, and our soul may live in consideration of thine.*

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE Booterstown Branch.

The Seventh House of the Institute—Mrs. Barbara Versechoyle—The Archbishop desires that a Convent be opened in Booterstown—A Retreat for ailing Sisters—Letters—Father Andrew Ennis—Friends often Neutrals in Times of Trouble—Mother McAuley finds the Booterstown House better than she expected—Death of Sister M. Gertrude Jones—Fine Specimen of Analysis of Character—James Macaulay—His Illness and Death—Letters—Mother McAuley's Brother—The Nine Choirs of Angels.

THE seventh house of the Institute, St. Anne's, Booterstown, was founded by Mother McAuley early in the summer of 1838. As the difficulties in connection with her convent in Kingstown continued to increase until it was finally closed, Mother McAuley, at the suggestion of the archbishop, thought of transferring the Kingstown Sisters to Booterstown, which is quite near, though a different parish, until the Kingstown affairs could be definitely arranged ; and circumstances favored her design.

Mrs. Barbara Versechoyle, a devout and charitable lady, well known in Dublin half a century ago, was anxious that a convent should be founded in this place, and, through her representations, the Right Hon. Sidney Herbert gave ground for a convent and schools, and assumed a large share of the expense of their erection. A committee of gentlemen, residents of this wealthy suburb, who were accustomed to dispense food and clothing to their poor neighbors, were desirous of relinquishing this duty to the Sisters of Mercy. The clergy of the parish seconded their request, and the archbishop used his influence to induce

the holy foundress to spare a few Sisters as soon as possible for the projected establishment.

As there were several Sisters delicate and ailing at this period, Mother McAuley had a double motive in acceding to these proposals. She writes to Carlow, March 24, 1838: "Father Ennis was here yesterday about our going to Booterstown. There is a good room in which the caretaker's family lived all the winter. I intend to put Sisters M. Cecilia and Ursula in that; indeed, every part of it [the house] is perfectly dry, it has been so long building." And on the 15th of May: "We had some days of real summer, which had a most beneficial effect on our invalids. Sharp cold returned yesterday, and sleet this morning, and they have felt the change already. I did hope to have our weak ones in Booterstown this week, but am afraid to venture, though it is very sheltered and Father Doyle most pressing." June 16 she writes from Booterstown: "This house is better than I expected. The cells are uncomfortable, doors so very large and in the centre, so that the head of the bed would not fit at either side, and the windows, as large, opposite the door. The only way with the room is across, which scarcely leaves a passage at the foot. . . . I trust your cells will not have too much *door*, and will have a good place for a bed, which might have been here had the doors been put to one end, thus: [here is an explanatory drawing]; in place of which we have a great, wide door in the centre, opposite a large window." On July 3 she writes to Dr. Fitzgerald: "Everything here is much more satisfactory than we expected. I know you will be pleased to hear that Father Ennis is remarkably kind, and anxious to do all in his power to promote our comfort. He regrets the past, and says if he lives seven years longer it will be atoned for."

Father Andrew Ennis was a particular friend of reverend mother's, and, as he had much influence with Dean Meyler, she reasonably expected he would use it in her be-

half when the chaplaincy difficulty occurred, in which she was disappointed. When troubles of this kind assail us not every one is brave enough to espouse the weaker side, even if it be the right side. And in some instances we have much to be thankful for, if our "particular friends" prefer neutrality to the stronger side, even though it be occasionally true that "a neutral is a coward."

Booterstown was very accessible from Dublin, being a station of the only railway then in Ireland, which stretched from Dublin to Kingstown. It was at Booterstown that Mother McAuley, after observing the steam-carriages, which pass close to the convent, was heard to regret that we cannot, or do not, apply ourselves as unweariedly to the service of God as they do to the annihilation of distance. It was here, too, that she watched over the last hours of Sister Mary Gertrude, the first convert—except her niece, Mary Teresa—and the first Welshwoman who joined the Institute. The cold, reticent manners of this lady, and her rigid views of perfection, which she appeared to place in making war on all her inclinations, good, bad, and indifferent, rendered her far less attractive than the bright, warm-hearted religious among whom her lot was somewhat unaccountably cast. She was removed from St. Mary's in January, 1839, on account of the increasing delicacy of her health, but she continued to sink gradually till Ascension Day, May 9, 1839, when her soul passed to its eternal home. The description which Mother McAuley gives of Sister Mary Gertrude is one of the most powerfully written pieces of character-painting we have ever seen, equal, perhaps, to anything of its kind in English literature. We commend it to students in the art of analysis; but, unlike our great masters of to-day, the holy foundress dissects a real, throbbing, human heart and a genuine human soul, not the fanciful passions of a shadow, and hers has, therefore, the advantage of being a true picture:

“CONVENT OF MERCY, ST. ANNE’S,  
“BOOTERSTOWN, May 11, 1839.

“MY DEAR SISTER M. FRANCES: Our poor Sister M. Gertrude is no longer an inhabitant of this transitory world. She expired on Ascension Day. For the last year she was chiefly confined to bed; fourteen weeks ago she was removed here for change of air, and chiefly that she might have the comfort of being present at Mass without having many stairs to descend. No symptoms of death appeared till Monday. She had every spiritual consolation. Father O’Hanlon came out here three times to see her. Her dear remains were this morning deposited with those of her eleven Sisters. We hope to have them all home before another year [in the cemetery she was preparing at St. Mary’s].

“Reviewing all the past, I regard our poor Sister M. Gertrude as a martyr for the faith. The violent efforts she made to embrace and practise it, and the total separation from all to whom she was ever known, gave a shock to the whole nervous system which could not be recovered. Delighted with the Catholic faith, she fancied that all who observed it must be divine; hence she was often disappointed. Yet for one moment she would not think of returning, lest there might be danger of losing it. On Ascension Day Sister M. Cecilia said to me :

“Well, reverend mother, though poor Sister was sometimes a little tiresome, I often thought she was like a martyr. She seemed to me to be constantly offering violence to feelings which were not in any degree overcome. All her mind turned to England and English manners. *We* could not converse so agreeably . . . or do anything so well as they [her friends] could at Bridgenorth, which, she said, possessed every attraction under heaven but the true faith.

“When describing the amiable and, as she would say, exalted dispositions of her relations, she seemed to think they were all lost for want of the Catholic faith. This feeling was engraven on her soul by some supernatural means. Her case was an extraordinary one; God alone can appreciate its value. I am certain her reward will be great. She suffered in mind and body for nine years, from no visible cause but a rending of the heart by the violent sacrifice of all the predilections of thirty-seven years.

A vocation to the religious life has its joys, but her whole concern was the preservation of her faith. Guarding against all that could put *it* in danger, she would not trust her own perseverance, unless shielded as she was.

“ Her countenance was sweetly composed in death, her teeth perfectly white, not the slightest swelling in her feet, which are strong signs of not being in an unhealthy state of body. Sister M. Monica and I were watching with her ; we had said the last prayers two or three times. At eleven on Wednesday night we concluded she would live a day or two longer, as no change appeared. The instant the clock struck twelve she stretched out her arms, and, as if it were an immediate call on her to go, settled her head, and before we could say the prayers she was gone ! ”

During the last months of the short life of her eldest nephew, James Macaulay, the foundress was obliged to reside a good deal at Booterstown, in order to be near him, as his uncle, Dr. James McAuley, had sent him to that healthy suburb for change of air. He was in a dying state when she left for Birr in December, 1840, though he lingered till the following March. The superior of St. Anne’s during his illness was Sister M. Genevieve Jarmyn, a venerable religious, who entered St. Mary’s in 1833 at the age of fifty-seven, and was the first widow that joined the congregation. On January 12, 1841, the foundress wrote from Birr :

“ My poor James has rallied a little. My good, affectionate Sister M. Genevieve is his constant nurse, gives all her day to him, and, when she finds it necessary, goes again in the evening. She has become quite fond of him, and, provided he does nothing without her leave, grants whatever he wishes. He won’t even open a book that is lent him till she approves of it. How good God is to him ! ”

“ A long poetic epistle from Sister M. Ursula, who says :

“ ‘ Sister Genevieve’s garden is locked up in snow,  
So she cannot exert herself there ;  
But a certain sick child whom you tenderly know  
Has all her affectionate care.’ ”

Sister M. Genevieve, like several of the earlier members, was an enthusiastic gardener ; she did much to increase the beauty of the convent grounds, and it was her delight to raise flowers for the decoration of the altar. In the above there is no covert insinuation that if the garden had not been snow-bound the sick child, James Macaulay, would not have had quite so much of her attention, for she was most devoted to the dying boy. Several of Mother McAuley's letters are dated Booterstown.

In October, 1840, she wrote to Mother Frances :

" My poor James is in an advanced stage of consumption. He keeps the same way, but is, I suppose, getting nearer to eternity. He is really pious, and wishes the priest to visit him frequently, and receives Holy Communion as often as persons in his state can. The Sisters are with him every day. He is quite cheerful and speaks of his death most happily. This is a great consolation. Continue to pray for him. My poor Robert's last wish was that the Sisters would always pray for his poor soul. I am with my dear child as much as possible."

In December, 1840, she wrote to the same :

" We have a Sister in fever ; . . . another has erysipelas. In the midst of all this a note from Sister M. Genevieve, saying : ' Come as fast as possible ; James is dying and wants to see you.' My cough was greatly increased by going, as the doors and windows had to be kept open to give air to my poor boy. The weakness passed away. I fear my poor child will have many such. He is in a heavenly state of mind, always imploring God's forgiveness. Get all the prayers you can for him. Thanks be to God, he is quite joyful ! How good our Lord is to him ! "

In March, 1840, she pathetically describes the departure of "the last of her earthly joys" :

" My poor James is in eternity. He died like a saint. Though parched with thirst, he would not take a drop of water without making the sign of the cross, or suffer his

pillow to be moved without saying a little prayer. He was never impatient for five minutes, though for six months he was not up an entire day. He received the Holy Viaticum every eight days, and lived to the last eighth, so as to receive it two hours before he died. He would not allow the crucifix to be removed from his bedside, even when his uncle came. Tell all this to Dr. Fitzgerald. It will gratify him to find that the pious impressions did not pass away. You will all pray fervently for my poor boy, I know. My earthly joys are all cut down, thank God ! but the joys of my state remain, and I feel the most lively gratitude. I have nothing now to draw me one hour from my religious Sisters, in whom all my earthly happiness is centred. Every year's experience of their worth attaches me more strongly to them, and I am as ardent for new ones as if I were only just beginning. I suppose it is the spirit of my state, and all my first children . . . have it."

Booterstown was a place of sad, sweet memories to the holy foundress after the death of her sister's eldest son. Robert Macaulay died some months before. Mary Teresa (1833) and Catherine (1837) died at St. Mary's, of which community they were professed members. The uncle above alluded to was the only brother of the foundress, a physician of much eminence in Dublin, an upright, honorable man and affectionately attached to his illustrious sister. He survived her many years, but, so far as we have been able to learn, he was not converted, at least not openly ; and if this be so, he was the only non-Catholic with whom Catherine McAuley ever came into close contact without attracting him or her to the true faith. Neither he nor her sister can be said to have apostatized, as they were mere infants at the time of their father's death. And it was the thought that she had suffered Protestants to tamper with the faith of her children that gave birth to the awful remorse that made their mother's last hours so terrible, when she found it was too late to reclaim them.

The history of the convent of Booterstown is a history of devotion to the duties of the Institute and solid good accomplished in every way. It has a poor-school, attended by six hundred children, and an orphanage, which is now called a Certified Industrial School and contains over eighty orphans, who are trained to household work, laundry work, cooking, sewing, etc., and receive besides a thorough religious training and a plain English education. The Booterstown Sisters also attend the beautiful new schools of the neighboring parish, Blackrock. Numbers are prepared for the sacraments, and the sick and dying poor in the vicinity are visited and relieved. It remains a branch from St. Catherine's, Baggot Street, and is administered by eleven religious. When it was first established Mother McAuley's seven convents used to be playfully called "The Seven Joys." When Limerick was added the convents were "The Eight Beatitudes"; but this was for a very short time, for the ninth house was soon founded at Naas, and then her houses became, in conventional parlance, "The Nine Choirs of Angels."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### FOUNDATION OF THE LIMERICK CONVENT.

Bishop Ryan applies for Sisters—Letters—Visit to Cork—The London Postulants—Charleville—Arrival of the Sisters in Limerick—Curious Circumstances—The Poor Clares—Peter's Cell—Failures—History of Peter's Cell—Apparition of the Blessed Virgin—Horrors of the Plague and the Siege—St. Saviour's—Martyrdom of Terence Albert O'Brien—Retribution—Horrible Death of Ireton—The Violated Treaty—Conclusion.

IN 1837 Most Rev. John Ryan, Bishop of Limerick, applied for a few Sisters to found a convent in the ancient “City of the Violated Treaty.” But, great as was her zeal for that city in which she had prayed so fervently the preceding year, Mother McAuley was obliged to acknowledge that, having just opened the houses of Carlow and Cork, she had not a single Sister to spare. The zealous prelate, however, was not so easily put off. “If you cannot give me Sisters,” he wrote, “you can lend me some. Two or three will suffice, and, a beginning once made, several ladies of the city, at present under my direction, will join your Order.” But the holy foundress had not even a Sister to lend. The year 1837 had been peculiarly severe on the rising Institute. Five Sisters, among whom was her beloved niece, Catherine Macaulay, died in about as many months of that year. Mother McAuley made his lordship a conditional promise for the following year, which he thought ought to take effect on January 1, 1838. But it was with difficulty that the foundation business could be closed after the August retreat, 1838, though the bishop sent his vicar-general, Dr. Hogan, to expedite it. About this time Mother McAuley wrote to Carlow: “In the

midst of other matters the Limerick foundation was pressed and concluded for the first week in September. You may be sure that this is sorrowful news to me, if I cannot go to Carlow, but it is impossible to put it [the Limerick foundation] off. The season does not admit of delay; we are too late as it is. We have not yet decided who will go besides Sister M. Elizabeth Moore and Sister M. Vincent Hartnett."

On the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity, September 8, 1838, reverend mother set out for Limerick with the above-named Sisters, a lay postulant, Eliza Liston, who were to remain, and Sister M. Aloysius Scott, who was to assist for a time. As her presence was urgently desired at Cork and Charleville, a roundabout mode of reaching their destination was selected, and the party proceeded to Cork by steamer. This was not Mother McAuley's first visit by water to "the beautiful citie," and we may well imagine the delight with which she pointed out to her untravelled companions the various objects of interest, not a few of them ruined abbeys and desecrated fanes, visible on either side as their vessel, coming in from the sea, steamed up between the verdant coasts of the lovely Cork River. Their arrival was eagerly looked for at Rutland Street by Mother Clare Moore, Mother Josephine Warde, and the rest of the little band, including the English Sisters, who had frequently declared, with more enthusiasm than they were accustomed to exhibit, that the holy foundress was the only person among the dwellers on earth whom they wished to see and know. Subsequently they declared that she more than realized all their expectations; and the pleasing impressions were mutual. She promised to assist at their profession the following year, which, indeed, Bishop Murphy made imperative on her. The greetings between the dear Sisters who a short year ago had formed but one band were tender and cordial, and their parting sad but hopeful.

The travellers spent a few days at Charleville, which so greatly needed all the interest and affection in their power to bestow, and reached Limerick late on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1838. But, late as it was, they found a dear young postulant awaiting their coming, not merely to welcome them, but also to join their little band. This was the sweet little Ellen Potter, who had already spent a few months in the Baggot Street novitiate, but was taken out by her relatives on account of failing health. A season of travelling and home-care had quite renovated her naturally delicate constitution, and she pleaded so earnestly, and answered for the bishop's consent so positively—he was then from home—that the mother-foundress, to whom her sweetness and innocence were well known, could not refuse to receive her. This sweet child was destined to be the standard-bearer of the little flock—the first to join the Limerick community, and the first to be called to the heavenly recompense.

The circumstances of the Limerick foundation are singular in the Annals of the congregation :

In 1815 several nuns of the Order of Poor Clares feloniously opened a school in Limerick near a ruined abbey known as Peter's Cell. Some of the laws which made the giving or receiving an education by Catholics a crime were beginning to fall into desuetude, though still unrepealed (1815).

For some years these ladies, though of a contemplative Order, continued to teach poor children with great devotedness ; but owing to pecuniary embarrassments, arising from the failure of the parties in whose hands the greater portion of their funds had been lodged, they were obliged to disband. The choir nuns availed themselves of a provision in their Rule which, it is stated, allows them in such a case to enter any congregation willing to receive them. But, strangely enough, it appears that there was no provision made in such a contingency for the lay Sisters, who, to

the number of three, stayed behind and endeavored, with the assistance of some secular ladies, to keep up the poor-school. They resolutely resisted all the entreaties of their relatives to return to their former homes, praying and hoping that God would ere long send some religious community to the "Cell" to which they might affiliate. Nuns of the Presentation Order subsequently came to conduct the schools, but seeing no hope of an increase of subjects, and no prospect of success in any direction, they became discouraged and returned to the convent from which they had filiated, after a weary struggle of three years.

The poor Claristes still clung to the old place, and hoped and prayed as in days of yore. They observed their vow of enclosure and lived as best they could. When cholera devastated the city in 1832, though unable to go abroad among the sick, they showed themselves true Sisters of Mercy by turning their schools into a hospital, where they nursed the sick day and night; and one of their number, whose name, unknown on earth, is written in the Book of Life, was the last victim of the fearful scourge.

The raptures of delight into which the coming of the Sisters of Mercy in 1838 threw these poor ladies may be more readily imagined than described. It was already dark—eight in the evening—when the party arrived. The dear old nuns embraced the foundress and her children with effusion, and in words of genuine eloquence thanked the good God for sending His spouses once more to this heretofore ill-fated spot. In their simple, homely style they described all this as a beautiful dream, too good to come true, and they touched and fondled and caressed the "new nuns" as though they regarded the whole scene as some charming illusion, and feared that the sweet apparitions might vanish at any moment.

Next morning their hopes seemed blighted. When all assembled for prayer the bell of the adjacent church rang for Mass, and reverend mother, not knowing whether a

priest would come to say Mass in the house, gave the signal to go out to Mass. The Claristes, bound to enclosure, were not expected to follow, but our good mother had no idea they would fail to understand why the Sisters of Mercy went out. But they attributed the exit to quite another than the real cause. When these ladies entered religion there were no "walking nuns" in the English-speaking world. They had never seen nuns cross the portals, save for a final departure, so they thought the illusion had indeed vanished, that the foundress had changed her mind and brought her Sisters away from this unpromising field, and they wept and sobbed bitterly. Meanwhile a priest came to say Mass for the new Sisters, and to him they unfolded their sad tale. He consoled them and confidently assured them that they were mistaken, and, to their intense delight, the return of the party soon verified his words.

Deeply was Mother McAuley touched by the almost romantic story of these holy women, already quite aged and of such well-tried virtue. She offered to do anything in her power to mitigate their lot, so full of sorrows and disappointments most patiently borne. They, on their part, regarded her and her Sisters as a heavenly apparition, and entreated to be affiliated to her Order, being but too happy to prepare to undergo the customary term of probation. Although, as a general rule, Mother McAuley would not consent to anything of the kind, yet she rightly regarded this as a case altogether exceptional, and, with the full approbation of the bishop and the community, she received the dear old aspirants, whom she regarded as two old saints, for whose sake blessings would be showered on the new foundation. "While," says the annalist, "they preserved their veneration for the Order in which they had spent their early religious years, they were deeply attached to that in which, at an advanced age, they found the most considerate kindness with peace and happiness."

It is needless to say how amused and saddened "the new nuns" were when they heard the construction put upon their first egress from "Peter's Cell" by the ancient religious.

Mother McAuley found everything at the "Cell" more convenient than she had expected. A committee of gentlemen had subscribed towards the necessary repairs, kindly superintended the work, and furnished the old habitation in conventional style. Two communities having failed to effect a permanent settlement at the "Cell," the whole place had fallen to the possession of the Franciscan fathers, who placed it at the disposal of the bishop for educational purposes. "Peter's Cell" consisted of a rambling main building with several small, detached houses communicating with it. His lordship, who was, from first to last, the kindest friend and most liberal benefactor the Limerick Institute possessed, transferred the whole property to the Sisters of Mercy.

No spot in the soft clime of Munster is, perhaps, so full, certainly none is more full, of holy and historic memories. The boundary-wall, a beautiful ivy-clad ruin, pierced with high, arched windows, northwest of the Sisters' garden, was a side-wall of the ancient church belonging to the great Abbey of St. Saviour's, built in 1227 by Donagh Cairbreach O'Brien, Prince of Thomond, and endowed by him for the sons of St. Dominic, who soon after came to colonize it. There was much in the history of this celebrated house to endear it to religious. The spirit of zeal, learning, and sanctity, eminently characteristic of the great patriarch of the Friars Preachers, had descended abundantly on many of its inmates. Several were called to the episcopacy, while not a few won the still greater glory of the martyr's crown.

The Blessed Mother of God also specially distinguished this place at her miraculous appearance on the summit of the cathedral dedicated to her, which is recorded to have

taken place about three o'clock on a bright July afternoon, 1651. Accompanied by St. Dominic, St. Francis, and five other heavenly beings, she was seen by the eager multitude moving from the cathedral to St. Saviour's, and thence to St. Francis', which, though near, was without the city walls. The wonders related of Knock, and of Limerick also, within the last few years, have attracted considerable attention to the well-authenticated apparition of 1651.

At the suppression of religious houses in the reign of Henry VIII. the spoliation of St. Saviour's began. Its ruin was completed during the sieges of 1651 and 1691, under the tyrannical Cromwell and the treacherous William of Orange. The history of the ruined abbey is especially connected with the former. The saintly Terence Albert O'Brien, born in Limerick in 1600, had been prior of this house before his perilous elevation to the see of Emly, 1647. He is described by the Nuncio, Rinuccini, as "a man of prudence and sagacity, . . . of considerable experience, . . . who deserved the highest advancement that Rome could bestow." He returned to Limerick just as Ireton, son-in-law of Cromwell, was about to march on that devoted city. The plague was raging fearfully, and the intrepid prelate moved among the besieged like a ministering angel. The fact that eight thousand citizens perished by the pestilence during the siege shows in what a poor condition the place was to resist the efforts of the enemy. Day and night the bishop encouraged the people to be true to their God and their country, and the besiegers thought that if this devoted servant of the plague-stricken, and ardent champion of liberty, would cease his stirring and patriotic appeals an easy victory would be theirs; they therefore privately made him an offer of forty-three thousand gold crowns if he would but leave the city. But he disdainfully rejected their ignominious proposal, for his noble heart was as incapable of treachery to his country as to his God. When the siege was raised no quarter was

allowed to priests or religious, yet one hundred and twenty escaped in various disguises, with the garrison of the place, who, by the terms of the capitulation, were allowed to leave the city unmolested.

But the bishop was selected as a special target for the vengeance of Ireton; a price was set upon his head, and he was excluded by name from the general amnesty. It was in the pest-house, ministering to the sick and dying, that the Cromwellian officers seized this brave ecclesiastic. Brought before Ireton, he was tried by court-martial and condemned to the horrible death of a traitor, in which the gibbet preceded the block and the quartering was begun before life was extinct. The holy culprit, undismayed at so dire a prospect, upbraided Ireton for the cruelties which had deluged the unhappy country with innocent blood, and, in stern words which proved prophetic, summoned the unjust and sanguinary judge to meet him at the bar of eternal justice to answer to God for his crimes.

The bishop was imprisoned October 27, and martyred at the market-place on the eve of All Saints, October 31, 1651. He walked joyfully to the place of execution, animating and consoling the weeping multitude who followed him at the risk of their lives, and to whom he addressed the following words, gathered by a pious contemporary : "Hold firmly by your faith and observe its precepts; murmur not against the arrangements of God's providence, and thus you will save your souls. Weep not for me, but rather pray that in this last trial of death I may, by firmness and constancy, attain my heavenly reward."

Thus perished, at the comparatively early age of fifty-one, one of the holiest prelates and purest patriots that ever illuminated the Irish Church or taught his countrymen how to live and how to die for that beauteous land which in every age has evoked such passionate love from the hearts of her brave sons and fair daughters. The noble head of the martyr was spiked on a tower which stood in

the middle of the bridge ; and the sacred spot on which he won his crown is still proudly pointed out by his compatriots, and venerated by them with the piety characteristic of their race.

Terence Albert O'Brien is the most distinguished among the martyrs added to the "great cloud of witnesses over our head " during the Cromwellian invasion—an array including men, women, and children, the illustrious and the unknown, religious and secular, noble and plebeian, who for Christ's sake

" Spared neither land nor gold,  
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,  
In the brave days of old,"

or rather who, having given the whole substance of their house for love—of God and of their country—despised it all as nothing.

Eight days after the terribly dramatic scene at the court-martial the dark and cruel Ireton was writhing in the agonies of the plague, which he had probably caught from the bishop, whom he had summoned from the pest-house to his presence ; for it is well known that the plague was often communicated by the clothing of persons from infected places, although such, like the martyr in this instance, had never shown any symptoms of the disease.

The wretched man now felt that his hour of retribution had come. He raved wildly of the murdered prelate, wished he had never seen him, and charged upon his council the awful crime which could not have been committed except by his order. This fierce persecutor, who had spilt the blood of the saints as water, enjoyed no repose of mind or body after the awful summons of his victim. In tortures which no remedy could assuage he died, after a few days, in despair.

The siege of 1691 was still more disastrous. The citizens, even to the women and children, bravely defended

their city, against the mercenary troops of the short hero of Nassau, for James II., who, though of their ancient faith and lineage, little deserved the enthusiasm they displayed in his cause. Half crazed by domestic afflictions, and broken mentally and physically by sorrows, calamities, and persecutions, which had never ceased since the day he had abjured Protestantism and embraced the Catholic faith, poor James II. was no match for his wily "son, the Prince of Orange." In 1689 James had, with the concurrence of his Parliament assembled in Dublin, proclaimed full liberty of conscience to his Irish subjects.\* But his "son" changed all that, and the triumph of religious liberty was deferred a hundred and forty years. The flight of James rendered the heroism of his Limerick supporters a useless waste of life, and they surrendered on terms highly honorable to themselves, secured by a treaty whose articles were shamelessly violated by William and Mary.

From that period whatever bore any semblance of the ancient faith suffered ruin or injury. Of St. Saviour's nothing was left standing save the marvellous wall already mentioned, whose height and thickness give some idea of what the structure of which it is a part must have been in the ages of faith.

\* Grattan says of the members of this Parliament: "Though Papists, they were not slaves; they wrung a constitution from King James before they accompanied him to the field."



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE LIMERICK FOUNDATION, CONTINUED.

Uninviting Prospects—Timidity of the new Superior—Letters—Gospel Perfection—Sketch of Helena Heffernan—Description of Peter's Cell—Other Letters—The Gentlemen—The “Caps”—The sharp Ones say queer Things—Amusing Incidents—“Seventeen Nuns and two old Maids”—Letters—The National Board—The Visitation of the Sick—Before the Poorhouses—Opening of the House of Mercy—The Sunday-School—Increase of Subjects—Never incur Debt—“Pay as you go, and live within your Income”—A truly great Woman.

TO the Catholic heart of the foundress it must have been no ordinary delight to be chosen as the medium of restoring so venerable a place as Peter's Cell to its ancient destination. But this was a task of uncommon magnitude. The Presentation nuns and the Poor Clares had already failed to take root, as did also the Ursulines from the Waterford convent who had settled in Limerick in 1826. The first-named made a second attempt in 1836, being introduced by a wealthy and pious lady, Miss King, who devoted her life and fortune to the gratuitous education of poor children ; but their house in Sexton Street was then (1838) in a tottering condition and gave little promise of the success it eventually achieved.

Even the Sister whom the foundress selected to govern the little colony, and who was regarded in the community as a woman of great courage and address—which she subsequently proved herself to be—was dismayed at the prospect of the work, so unhopeful, before her. The following letter, called by the writer a “queer jumble,” and evidently written amid interruptions and anxieties of various kinds,

gives a graphic description of the earlier difficulties of what is now one of the finest religious establishments in the world :

“ Such a perplexing conflict as we have every day ! I cannot go for a month yet. As to Sister M. Elizabeth, we never sent out such a faint-hearted soldier, now that she is in the field. She will do all interior and exterior work, but to meet [parties] on business, confer with the bishop, conclude with a new subject, you might as well send the child that opens the door ! This will surprise you ; yet she is greatly liked, and when the first alarms are over, and a few in the house, all will go well. Sister M. Vincent Hartnett was professed yesterday ; we were obliged to admit several persons. The sermon was very fine and the singing good, my most angelic Sister M. Aloysius Scott presiding. . . . We finished our two Thirty Days’ Prayers, and are now going to say the whole Psalter for fifteen days —this is our last hope.

“ Do not say a word of any fears for this house. Every word takes wing. My language must be encouraging. If they thought I spoke unfavorably I should get nothing done these three months. We have never yet seen the foundress—this is Gospel perfection.”

The Gospel perfection of which reverend mother speaks was practised by Miss Helena Heffernan, through whose charity Dr. Ryan was enabled to invite the Sisters of Mercy to his episcopal city, and who assigned the establishment a double endowment, one for the community and one for the poor. So anxious was this lady that her left hand should not know what her right hand gave, and so intuitively did she shrink from attracting to herself any praise or gratitude for acts done solely for God’s honor and the relief of His suffering poor, that she never could be induced to visit the community which owed its existence chiefly to her bounty. The fine property she inherited from her brother she administered till her death for

their benefit. In her self-sacrificing charity she assumed all the trouble and inconvenience of receiving the rents of her estate, in order that, dispensing with an agent, she might have the more to bestow for the alleviation of human wretchedness. But she worked so entirely for God's glory, and desired so ardently to receive no reward here below, that all her ingenuity was exerted to keep the good she did a secret between her God and herself. During the famine years, and the period of slow recuperation which succeeded, she helped the poor in another way. Little rent was received from her tenants, and none demanded, until a series of good seasons put them in a condition to meet their obligations as before.

Mother McAuley gives a short description of her new home to Sister M. Teresa White, then (1838) presiding at Kingstown :

"This is a very nice old convent, called St. Peter's Cell, enclosed by the walls of an abbey, a beautiful ruin. Opposite the cell I occupy is a beautiful tomb in which a holy abbess and a lay Sister are deposited; a large weeping willow overhangs the grave. It looks delightful and excites to meditation of the most consoling kind. We have a very nice chapel and choir, good garden, and extensive school-rooms. The approach is very bad, but that is of no consequence to us, as we should often have to visit the neighborhood. The house is surrounded by trees and recreation ground, all being enclosed within fine old walls entirely lined with ivy. It is capable of being made a valuable institution, if God will grant His blessing to our exertions. I am sure you will obtain for us all the prayers you can. Get the Sisters to invite their patron saints and implore St. Teresa, who loved foundations, to intercede for poor Limerick, where no good seed has yet taken root."

Mother McAuley, as the above shows, did not consider the good seed represented by the three Presentation nuns

from the parent house, Cork, and their zealous foundress, Maria Catherine King,\* to have yet taken root.

Under a later date she says :

“The poor here are in a miserable state, and the whole surrounding neighborhood one scene of wretchedness and sorrow. Postulants will not do well till attired in the religious dress. The people are very sharp and say queer things ; even the poor do not like ‘the caps.’ Every place has its own peculiar ideas and feelings, which must be yielded to when possible.

“Sister E. Potter was certainly designed for the place. Her ardent zeal for Limerick made her uneasy elsewhere, and her being on the spot, with good connections and interest, promoted the object very much. The gentlemen are all with us ; fathers, brothers, and uncles will give no assent [to their relatives to go to] any other [Order].”

The dislike which the Limerick poor bestowed on “the caps” (the postulants) caused the foundress to dispense with several months of the probation time usually allotted to beginners, and allow three of the young ladies who had joined her to receive the white veil at once. The “queer things” the “sharp” ones said were less unpleasant than amusing, as a few instances will show :

“Two of the angels came to see my Johnny to-day,” said a pleasant matron who superintended small sales of vegetables in the historic market-place, to a sympathetic neighbor who called to discuss matters and things with her on a dull November evening in 1838.

“No, mammy,” interrupted the patient in shrill tones, “there was but wan angel. The other wan was only a girl ; I seen her hair myself under the cap.”

At the hall-door the same idea came out more forcibly.

In the rush of business consequent on a new foundation

\* Miss King subsequently joined the Presentation Sisters, and died in 1866, aged eighty years.

each member has to do more than her share, and the newly-arrived, or postulants, are never forgotten in the division of labor. Of the three postulants who first joined the Limerick Institute one had already superintended a cholera hospital in 1832, and was considered exceptionally able, and such she has since proved herself to be. Another is described by the foundress as fully equal to her niece, Mary Teresa—that being so richly dowered with beauty, intellect, and piety. And she found Miss Potter so capable in every way that she considered her “specially designed” to meet the difficulties of the new venture. Yet not one of these rarely-gifted women could satisfy the poorest visitor that rang the door-bell.

“Couldn’t I see one of the ladies, agra? I’d like to tell me throubles an’ get a bit of an advice.”

A postulant comes forward, and, with every appearance of sympathy, assumes a listening attitude.

“Musha, blessings on yer sweet face, now, but it’s a rale nun I’d like to be spakin’ to, machree.”

“Oh! but we’re almost the same, dear. Our reverend mother is so busy! We come here to be nuns, and—”

“Ah! there, now, don’t be jokin’ me, honey. Sure I know ye are kind and good, alanna, but it’s the rale nun I’m wantin’. I ax yer pardon, dear child.”

“Yes, dear, but you know we—”

“O me darlin’! ye wouldn’t do at all. Look at the hair, the brown hair, curlin’ under the cap. Couldn’t ye bring hither wan of the right wans, with her head under the holy veil, now, ye know, like the pictur’ of St. Brigid, glory be to God?”

Thus no one was able to transact business with the humblest caller but the foundress or one of the three other “rale nuns.” A similar spirit is manifested to this day, though perhaps not to such an extent. “I counted seventeen nuns and two old maids in the chapel,” said a simple woman recently, as she went forth from a convent celebration.

Neither of the "old maids" had seen twenty summers, but both, being postulants, wore "caps."

In the third month of her stay in Limerick Mother McAuley wrote to her dear correspondent in Carlow :

"I would have written sooner, but waited to tell you when we expect to leave this, which was not decided till yesterday. I hope to be with you on the Feast of the [Immaculate] Conception, but am not yet sure that circumstances will admit of it. . . . I did not stay one day for rest or recreation, but extreme caution was necessary in selecting Sisters likely to make a good, steady beginning, and I trust we have succeeded."

The presence of the Sisters of Mercy drew immense numbers to the schools which they opened at Peter's Cell. As a rescript had been issued by the authority of Pope Gregory XVI., permitting Catholics to avail themselves of the privileges offered by the National Board of Education, most of the convent schools, by direction of the bishops, became connected with it, Limerick being among the first, and the very first of the Order of Mercy, so connected. As the poor children in Ireland are almost universally Catholic, the system, though technically called *mixed*, was practically *denominational*, the action of the government being really restricted to giving aid to the schools, supplying books and other necessaries at a low rate, and inspecting about once a year the literary progress of the children. In many instances this state of things remained unchanged, but in others the interference of the government officials was found so oppressive that several houses were not sorry to relinquish the above advantages and sever the connection. The poor-schools conducted by the Sisters of Mercy are probably the largest in the English-speaking world, and their pupils are counted by hundreds of thousands. The Limerick schools are among the largest in the Institute.

As Sisters of Mercy were, and are, the only uncloistered nuns in Limerick, their visitation of the sick extended over

the whole city and far into its beautiful suburbs. Although most of them were strangers to Limerick, they readily found the calls sent to them by clergymen and others, which they attributed to their guardian angels' guidance; for they always invoked their angels' aid, who in return, they gratefully acknowledged, led them into the very houses in which they had patients to visit. At this period the poor population was not decreased by that delightful invention of Queen Elizabeth's, the poorhouse, which was not introduced here till about three years later. There was a great deal of distress, but there was also a great deal of charity. Husbands, able-bodied men, were not torn from their wives, and children from parents, and shut up between stone walls, that they might be in a position to receive the scantily-doled-out aid of the state—in a word, poverty had not yet been incarcerated as a crime.

Many of those visited by the Sisters were persons of large families, thrown out of employment by sickness, and requiring nutriment as well as medical remedies to help them over the attack. A soup-house was opened, and soup, bread, and meat supplied to the needy daily at appointed hours. Thus many were restored, and among them men on whose health depended the support of eight or ten in family.

The House of Mercy for the Protection and Training of Women of unblemished character was opened November 19, 1838. Situations were easily procured for the young women as soon as they were trained to habits of order, cleanliness, and economy in domestic work.

A Sunday-school was opened for girls employed during the week at the factories; and, though closely confined for six days at work, they gladly came in great crowds to receive instruction from the nuns on the seventh. The bishop and clergy took the deepest interest in this meritorious work, and were frequently present at the Sunday classes.

These works, so highly appreciated by clergy and laity, and the entrance of several postulants, allayed the fears entertained for the success of the new inmates of Peter's Cell. The bishop placed but one restriction on Mother Elizabeth : "Do not incur debt"—an unnecessary one in her case, but characteristic of his sense of justice. No fear of any convent incurring debt while the holy foundress lived. "Pay as you go," and "Live within your income," and "Do without what you cannot pay for" were maxims well impressed upon her children. And very exactly were they observed during her short but full religious career.

From the beginning his lordship fully appreciated the wisdom of the choice made by the foundress when she placed Mother Elizabeth over the young establishment. His penetrating mind saw in the timidity she at first showed a humility and self-distrust which excited hopes that years served to illustrate and confirm.

On the departure of Mother McAuley, December, 1838, the new superioress felt in its full weight all the responsibility of her position. She could say with St. Gregory Nazianzen : "O Thou who hast laid this burden on me, pity me and strengthen me under it." "May we not," asks one of her spiritual children, "regard the blessings which God poured out on His works done through her as a reward of that sense of nothingness which from the very outset made her diffide in herself and place all her trust in Him alone, relying on Him to enable her to cultivate fruitfully for eternal life the extensive vineyard that lay before her?"

From 1838 to this hour Limerick has ever gratefully acknowledged the superior worth of the noble woman selected to establish the Order of Mercy among her citizens.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### INCIDENTS PLEASANT AND SAD.

Reminiscences of Mother McAuley—No correct Likeness of her exists—Letters—Father Mathew—Mother Elizabeth's Temperance Sodality—Profession—Affecting Sermon—A poetic Epistle—The Bishop holds a Reception—Rhymes—Illness and Death of the “Sweet Sister Poet,” Teresa Potter—Her Funeral—More Subjects—Mother McAuley visits Limerick—Mother Elizabeth watches over her last Moments—Her Love for the Foundress—Annual Celebration of the Twelfth of December—Old Letters.

ONE of the postulants who received the white veil from reverend mother in Limerick, December, 1838, writes of her with enthusiasm forty-three years later: “Our reverend foundress was the first Sister of Mercy I ever saw. She gave me in Limerick my instructions for reception, and she came to see us several times between that date, December, 1838, and her death. At recreation she devoted herself to the young Sisters, amusing them with games, etc., and she seemed to me the soul of true sympathy and motherliness. We all loved her very dearly. She would not allow a trace of loftiness or pretension, and had nothing of the kind herself. I never saw any remarkable woman who was more free from everything that could suggest the idea of what the world calls a ‘clever woman.’ My estimate of her was that she was a true mother and a lady; that she regarded herself as a humble instrument in the hands of God, who was making use of her in a work not of her own doing.

“ You will be surprised to hear that we have no picture of her. When the Sisters ask me when are we to have one I reply, ‘ When I am dead and no one remains to compare

the picture with the original.' She allowed none to be taken during her life. The few executed soon after her death bear a slight but most flattering resemblance; most of the engravings bear none whatever."

The above is heartily endorsed by the few now (1881) living who saw the holy foundress and conversed with her.

The Limerick Sisters were especially dear to Mother McAuley. "They have indeed a sweet community in Limerick," she wrote in 1839. "Everything goes on well there, thank God!" To Mother Elizabeth she wrote, on hearing of some successes that had just blessed her labors:

"How heartily, how fervently I rejoice in every circumstance that contributes to your spiritual and temporal happiness! All that I hear of the dear Limerick Sisters brings joy to my mind. They are pronounced the good seed, and, thanks be to God, they are placed in a good soil. May God grant you lively gratitude and profound humility! Then, indeed, you will be a child of benediction."

All the objects of the Institute were soon in successful operation in Limerick, and God raised up several munificent benefactors to aid the Sisters with ample means in establishing the fine benevolent institutions which now adorn that ancient city. On December 3, 1839, Mother McAuley's dear friend, the Apostle of Temperance, began in Limerick a mission against intemperance, during which he administered the pledge to tens of thousands, sacrificing the temporal interests of his brother-in-law, proprietor of a large distillery in Limerick. But holy souls never permit family ties to interfere when there is question of preventing evil.

Imitating the holy foundress, who supported the grand movement with all her power and influence, and still further aided the "Apostle" to the extent of taking the pledge and wearing the temperance medal herself, Mother Elizabeth organized a Christian Doctrine Society for women, making it a condition of membership to take the pledge.

The members soon swelled to thousands, from all parts of the city. Every Sunday they met at the "Cell," and, having listened to a stirring instruction and joined in some short prayers, each was supplied with a good book from a library established for their use.

The well-to-do among these pious women paid a small sum weekly, out of which a modest loan-fund was formed, from which the poorer members were set up in a little business or enabled in some way to earn a frugal livelihood, and those visited by serious illness received weekly a fixed sum. When necessary the funeral expenses of members were paid from the treasury. This was the model and origin of numberless similar sodalities. To have to exclude any of these poor women for breaking the pledge has been almost unknown in the story of this sodality.

On December 9, 1839, the novices received the previous year were admitted to profession. The eagerness felt to witness this ceremony brought people from a distance of twenty or thirty miles. A temporary gallery had to be erected in the convent chapel for the accommodation of the guests. Before the bishop's arrival seats, passages, and doorways were filled, and some, finding it impossible to wade through the crowd, made ingress through the windows.

The above gallery was the "surprising invention" of a local architect, and, though he vouched for its safety, every one thought it providential that no accident took place in the "hanging saloon." Rev. Mr. Murnane, a favorite preacher, taking as his text "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," enlarged on the works of mercy characteristic of the Order with such vigor and pathos that the vast concourse of people sobbed audibly.

The senior of the band professed, in a poetic epistle describing the ceremony to the holy foundress, who was then in London, acknowledges the receipt of four well-filled pages, which "dispelled all their fears and restored all their

smiles," but regrets not having received "a letter in poetry," which Mother McAuley had promised her, and which she feels sure must be "hidden in a corner of her desk." She gives a glowing description of the "imposing display of bishops and priests in sacerdotal array," of the genuine eloquence of the sermon, which, "in language most touching, depicted the love of our Saviour for all the afflicted." Alluding to the sacred associations of the place in which these solemn ceremonies were enacted, the preacher had spoken of the "saints that prayed within these aisles," and the Saint of saints whose blessed example they emulated in their ministrations to the poor, the ignorant, and the afflicted. And in language in which the rhyme and the reason were good, if not the poetry, the "dear Sister-poet" excuses all defects by saying it is the first time she had ever written anything serious, and asks the foundress to remember that "the grave does not lie in her way."

The young scribe goes on to say that the singing, the organ, the altar—everything, in short, was enchanting, and that the presence of the foundress alone was wanting to make perfect bliss at Peter's Cell. The bishop held a reception in the afternoon, during which some easy, pleasant bantering enlivened the reunion. The old married ladies lamented that Sisters of Mercy were not in their time, and his lordship, who was no longer young, informed the delighted group that chatted merrily around him that "were there Brothers of Mercy he'd join them the very next day."

All this badinage was duly acknowledged by the foundress, who wished to hear everything that happened in her convents, and never showed herself weary of detail. Viewed in the light of the events of the next few months, the scene, the description of it, "the letter of poetry" received by the bright, innocent girl who had just made her vows till death, not knowing that death was so near, are very touching.

In the "letter of poetry," which the foundress wrote to her "dear Sister-poet" New Year's day, 1839, are the lines :

“ The year thirty-eight is now past,  
Its cares and its pleasures all gone ;  
The year thirty-nine, if our last,  
Ought to find us our duties all done.”

In the light of subsequent events these lines would seem to contain a prophecy or a presentiment, for “ the year thirty-nine ” was indeed the last for this sweet, fervent Sister.

The year 1840 opened with the cross for the holy foundress, and the cross marked its progress. In March Sister M. Frances Marmion was dying in Dublin and Sister M. Frances Mahony in Cork, a Sister in Carlow was so ill that her recovery was not expected, and Sister M. Teresa Potter was attacked with a most virulent form of typhus fever. The foundress wrote to Mother Elizabeth, who, though resigned to the will of God, was almost distracted with grief at the prospect of losing so lovely and so beloved a member :

“ No words could describe what I felt on reading your letter ; though the accounts from Carlow were as hopeless, yet I fear much in this case. The dear, sweet, innocent creature—you will indeed have a child in heaven. God will support you in this great affliction. I know He will. His holy will be done ! If He call her away it will be to shield her from some impending evil, or to exercise your patience, or to try whether you love Him as well when He takes as when He gives. Some grand motive must actuate all His visitations. . . . I shall be agitated at the sight of your next letter. May God bless and preserve you all and give you humble, cheerful submission to His divine will ! ”

The Carlow invalid recovered, but “ the sweet, innocent creature ” had passed from earth before these tender lines reached the house of mourning. Reverend mother at once condoled with her stricken children : \*

“ I cried heartily and implored God to comfort you. I know He will. This has not been done in anger. Some

joyful circumstance will soon prove that He is watching over all your concerns, which are His own. But without the cross the real crown cannot come. Bless and love the fatherly hand that has wounded you. He will soon come, both hands laden with favors and blessings. My heart is sore, not on my own account, nor for the sweet, innocent spirit that has returned to her Heavenly Father's bosom, but for you. You may be sure I will go see you, if it were much more out of the way. Earnestly and humbly praying God to grant you His divine consolations and bless the dear Sisters, I remain, etc., etc."

The earthly tenement of this "sweet, innocent spirit" was borne to the convent cemetery by six priests, the bishop and other clergy walking processionaly in front of the coffin, the nuns behind, and the friends of the deceased heading the cortége. Thousands lined the garden and cemetery walls, uniting in the beautiful prayers of the Church for those "gone before us with the sign of faith." On hearing these particulars the foundress wrote :

"When I read your letter in the community-room several exclaimed: 'Oh! that is not death. Who would not like to die under such circumstances?' They [the Sisters] were astonished and delighted. It was, indeed, a heavenly ceremony, more so than any reception or profession. It was like a grand entrance into Paradise. It will even be a powerful attraction to many to put themselves in the way of obtaining such a blessed departure from this passing world!" \*

The last sentence, like so many others from the same source, proved prophetic. The number that now crowded to the novitiate was so great that it became necessary to build a new convent on the site of the old out-houses ; a

\* As the Limerick convent was the only one which at that time had a cemetery attached, it was the first in which the burial ceremonial was fully carried out. The holy foundress was greatly pleased and comforted by the account Mother Elizabeth wrote her of the solemn ceremony, and much gratified by the respect shown by bishop, clergy, and laity for her deceased child.

new House of Mercy followed, the old one being needed to enlarge the schools. To all these good works the bishop contributed liberally, denying himself many of the comforts his advanced age required, that he might have the more to bestow on the poor. The Sisters were now able to undertake the visitation of the public institutions—prisons, hospitals, and, later on, the workhouse. These they attended regularly to instruct, console, and relieve the poor inmates.

In November, 1840, Mother McAuley paid the visit promised above, and the Sisters perceived with indescribable grief that her health was rapidly failing. Her affectionate interest and her intimate correspondence with her Limerick Sisters was a source of consolation to both. When persons from Limerick visiting Baggot Street mentioned anything to the advantage of the Limerick house, which often happened, the holy mother would immediately make Mother Elizabeth and her children sharers in the happiness which such news afforded her.

Mother Elizabeth \* had the melancholy consolation of watching over the last days of the holy foundress, and a letter of hers quoted in the *Life of Catherine McAuley* gives a glimpse of the peace and happiness amid which the beautiful soul of the great mother passed to its rest in God. Nowhere was this loss more keenly felt than in Limerick, where the Sisters, especially Mother Elizabeth and her assistant, Mother M. Vincent Hartnett, loved her with a deep and indescribable love.

Mother Elizabeth religiously preserved all the letters the foundress ever wrote her, and read them at intervals to her children, who eagerly looked forward to this coveted treat.

\* It was to Mother Elizabeth that Mother McAuley confided the parcel supposed to contain her instruments of penance, to be burned; and just before Mother Elizabeth's arrival she had given her discipline, tinged with her blood, to the infirmarian for the same purpose. It was only after her death that her children learned to how great an extent their beloved mother had "borne about in her body the mortification of Christ."

The obscure passages, or rather those called forth by forgotten circumstances—for *clearness* is the salient characteristic of Mother McAuley's style—had the benefit of her lucid explanations. The veneration and affection of this holy woman for her dear mother increased as she advanced in life. A peculiar pleasure irradiated her countenance when she spoke of “our darling foundress” and the early years in Dublin—a subject of which she never wearied. The 12th of December she always caused to be observed as a holiday of the first class; the Sisters were wont to assemble around the portrait of their great mother, and a poem expressive of love, reverence, and gratitude towards her whose profession anniversary they desired to honor was declaimed by the best elocutionist, the other Sisters standing reverently during the recital. These poems are still preserved, and several of them are remarkable for a poetic beauty and simplicity which makes one regret that the verse-making talents of the writers were not called into requisition more frequently than once a year.

Letters of Mother McAuley, yellow, faded, discolored by time, written in her strong, legible characters, are to be found framed and hanging in the place of honor in several community-rooms of Convents of Mercy. They are regarded as heirlooms, or rather relics, the most treasured and valued of all that the Sisters inherit from the early days. It is a pleasure to us to be able to place the contents of many of these sweet, simple letters before her children for the first time.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE LIMERICK FOUNDATION, CONTINUED.

Some Letters—The radiant Gardens of Limerick—Letters—Increasing Ill-Health of the Foundress—A Debate between the Rational and Irrational Powers—Receptions and Professions—Easter Greetings—Blessings of Unity and Peace—A charming Ceremony—The true Spirit of Mercy—“God punishes us a little in His mercy, but never in His wrath.”

WE give here a few of the letters with which the holy foundress cheered and consoled her Limerick children:

“ BAGGOT STREET, July 24, 1839.

“ MY DEAREST SISTER M. ELIZABETH: We have this moment received your sweet fruit and flowers. I seldom saw any so fragrant to me: the offering of genuine affection has everything to enhance its value. I am looking at them now, and think the roses have some unusual shade; and such bright purple and rich yellow flowers!\* The gooseberry jams and jellies, apples, etc., all safe.

“ Now, what could possess you to think I could feel the slightest displeasure? I excused myself to write some nonsense in rhyme to my dear Sister M. Teresa—being deeply in her debt—but I could not say I felt any regret at what was written to me, or had one serious thought about it. Never suppose you can make me feel displeasure by giving any opinion that occurs to you. I am sure you ought to know me better. [This refers to some observations, etc., made about the third volume of *Geraldine*, which,

\* The gardens of Limerick, radiant with carnations, lilies, and roses, and “ sweet, pretty posies ” of every hue, have been long famous. Garryowen has been called the Limerick Vauxhall. Among other horticultural curiosities in Limerick was, and perhaps still is, Roche’s “ Hanging Garden.” Mother Elizabeth used occasionally to send some fine specimens to the foundress, who was very fond of flowers, which she found a help in keeping her heart raised to God.

as the foundress did not write for some days, Mother Elizabeth feared she did not like.]

“I have seen many who do not admire the third book of *Geraldine*, though nothing ever exceeded the sale—not a copy to be had in Dublin. Sisters Fleming and Whitty—two very nice persons, not twenty-one—and Jane Stirting were received yesterday by Dean Meyler. The votes have passed for the profession of Sister M—, in whose favor the archbishop remitted a year. [Rev.] Mr. Maher, of Carlow, preached a most delightful sermon, showing the vows of religion to be the perfection of the baptismal engagements, and pronouncing woe to the parent or guardian that will stop a child whom God calls to that state.

“I fear not getting this forward in time for the post. I expect to have the real heartfelt joy of seeing you in five or six weeks—rather, I think, in five. I hope to remain two days. The English Sisters say only one. They speak of being in London on the 24th of September, which, I suppose, cannot be accomplished; but they are most easily guided, nothing positive in their characters. Our building is nearly finished—a fine school-room and dormitory; the laundry not yet opened, but every prospect of its doing well.

“Our memorial to the board was signed by the most respectable Protestants—the surgeon-general [Sir Philip Crampton], Sir Henry Marsh, Mr. Hume, and several others. It was presented by Dr Murray, and well received. [This refers to the connection of the Baggot Street schools with the Board of Education, of which Archbishop Murray was a commissioner.]

“God bless and preserve you, my dearest Sister M. Elizabeth! Pray for your ever fondly attached

“M. C. McAULEY.

“P.S. Sister M. di Pazzi has not read your letter yet: I would not stand up till this was finished. I opened the letter and found it was from Sister M. Vincent, to whom, and to all, give our fondest love. I ought to say all that could animate and comfort you, for you are a credit to me. Every week I hear all that is edifying and respectable of your institution [from Limerick visitors to Dublin]. W— is doing all he can to get his niece with y. u. He says you will soon have plenty.

“Every one that came in since I began said, ‘O the

sweet smell ! Where did you get all the lovely flowers ?' And when I answered, 'From Limerick,' I think they fancied them somewhat out of the common way."

The following is from a letter dated March 14, 1840 :

"We have all our offices filled now. His grace came here on the 6th to make the appointments. Mother di Pazzi,\* assistant ; Sister M. Aloysius, bursar ; Sister M. Cecilia, mistress of novices. I have just been speaking to Father O'Hanlon of your request [that Mother McAuley should spend a few days at Limerick on her way to Galway]. He says he will go himself, but that is very doubtful. It would add fifty miles to my travelling, who am journeying fast enough out of this world. Every day I am weaker. My stomach has never recovered its last attack —frequent swellings and soreness. What writing this is ! Did I tell you at Easter we expect some ladies from Birmingham to serve a novitiate for that great town ?

"May God bless you and all with you ! Tell Miss Reddan I got her letter, and got a Sister to copy the enclosed lines for her ; she admired them greatly.

"We return to Kingstown in three weeks by Dr. Murray's desire.

"Ashamed of my writing, I got Sister M. Teresa [White] to write the other letters, but I know you would rather have this such as it is ; and as I owe you all in my power, I take pleasure in giving you my poor tribute of affection and esteem."

The following is dated Dublin, October 18, 1840 :

"I have been speaking so romantically of Limerick that

\* Mother McAuley's first mother-assistant was Mother Marianne Doyle, on whose removal to Tullamore, 1836, Mother Frances Warde succeeded her. Mother M. di Pazzi Delany, the first mistress of novices, appointed when Mother McAuley was no longer able to attend directly to the training of the young members, 1835, became assistant in 1840, and was succeeded by Mother M. Cecilia Marmion, of whom the holy foundress wrote : "There never was a mistress of novices more beloved. They [the novices] call the novitiate 'Paradise,' though the best discipline is kept up." As almost all the early members were sent on foundations, vacancies sometimes occurred; and on such occasions Mother McAuley selected the Sisters best fitted to fill them, and the archbishop invariably confirmed her choice. The news of the Confirmation of the Rule and Constitutions not reaching Ireland until after her last foundation, 1841, all superiors and subordinate superiors appointed during her life-time were appointed by the holy mother.

the English Sisters asked me would it be possible for them to see it after their profession, should they persevere, etc. This is a long look out—till next August. I at first answered that it would not be possible. Sister M. Cecilia begged to say that it would, and that Limerick was the only convent so many could visit conveniently.

“They seem to see no difficulty [as to expense]. Ought I to sanction such an application of money, as if it were found on a hill?

“The rational and the irrational powers have been contending ever since the thought was suggested. They discoursed as follows :

“*Rational Powers.* Would not so much money accomplish some good and useful object?

“*Irrational Powers.* Perhaps that money would not be forthcoming for any other purpose, but lie dead and doing nothing.

“*Rational Powers.* Would not a mere visit of such a distance tend to dissipate the fruit of their meditations for and after profession?

“*Irrational Powers.* Seeing a branch of the Institute, so short a time founded, now fully and regularly established might rather serve to strengthen their pious resolutions and animate their hopes for what they are about to undertake.

“*Rational Powers.* Could they not be told of it? Surely they would not entertain any doubt.

“*Irrational Powers.* What we are told by unquestionable authority inspires confidence, but what we see confirms it.

“*Rational Powers.* Where could they lie down at night?

“*Irrational Powers.* Anywhere.

“*Rational Powers.* They could not get into the refectory.

“*Irrational Powers.* They could get in, but it would be difficult to get out.\*

“Well, now, after all this nonsense, I was seriously thinking a great improvement might be made in the refectory if the wall was removed and the passage added up to the kitchen, opening into the refectory. It would make a great

\* Though the “*Irrational Powers*” argued anything but irrationally, the visit above pleaded for was never made, as the Sisters for the Birmingham foundation had to leave immediately after profession, in consequence of the serious illness of Mr. Hardman, founder of the Birmingham house and father of one of the Sisters.

addition, though it appears little now. Or if the kitchen wall were also moved and a little of the kitchen added, the refectory would be large enough. If any difficulty arise from breaking the passage through the hall, a small slice could be taken for that purpose—the pantry taken down ; a good prop would do very well. Look at it with all your brains, and you will soon make a great improvement. We find the kitchen opening into the refectory very convenient.

“If you wrote such a letter as this I should be seriously alarmed for your poor head. I hope Sister M—— will soon write to say she is getting strong. Three letters [have come] to announce the safe arrival [in London] of dear Sisters M. de Sales and Xavier ; a most affectionate one from Mother Clare returning thanks. We are to have professions and receptions in about three weeks. Mother de Sales and I have kept up a regular concert of sighing and moaning since the Sisters went [to London], but this day I was resolved not to be outdone, or even equalled, so commenced *groaning* for every sigh she gave, and our sorrows ended in our laughing at one another.

“Good-by for about a month. God bless you and all ! With my affectionate love to dear Sister M. Teresa and each one of the sweet family.

“P.S. My dearest Sister M. Vincent give me a real, true opinion on the [above] disputed question. . . . But oh! for pity’s sake speak in a whisper, or it will fly that we are all, English and Irish, going to move.

“Get all the prayers you can for our valuable T——, who is looking very bad this day, . . . and for my poor James Macaulay, who is in the last stage of consumption. Thanks be to God ! he has complied with all his religious obligations and is quite resigned to die.”

The following is dated Easter Monday, April 12, 1841 :

“I am impatient to send you a few hurried lines. rejoicing that our sorrowful meditations are at an end, and humbly beseeching God to impart to us all some portion of those precious graces and gifts which our dear Redeemer has purchased by His bitter sufferings, that we may endeavor to prove our love and gratitude by bearing some resemblance to Him, copying some of the lessons He has given us during His mortal life, particularly those of His Passion,

Poor Sister M. di Pazzi has been very ill, and is not yet well. Preparations for receptions and professions—not one old helpmate. Sisters Cowley, Ryan, and dear Sister Mary to be professed. Sisters Teresa McDonnell, M — P —, and V — to be received, and a lay Sister for the English mission. Not one prepared voice for the choir. Add to this my blunders and Mother di Pazzi's over-zeal and excitement, and you have a picture of a charming ceremony. God will help us through it. All are good and happy. The blessing of unity still dwells amongst us, and oh ! what a blessing. It would make all things else pass into nothing. All laugh and play together ; not one cold, stiff soul appears from the day they enter ; all reserve of an ungracious kind leaves them. This, indeed, is the spirit of the Order, the true spirit of Mercy, flowing on us, that, notwithstanding our unworthiness, God never seems to visit us with ang'ly punishment. He may punish us a little in mercy, but never in w<sup>i</sup>ath. Take what He will from us, He still leaves us His holy peace. And this He has graciously extended to all our convents, thousands of thanks and praises to His holy Name ! God bless and preserve you, my dear Sister M. Elizabeth ! With affectionate love to all, believe me your sincerely attached

“M. C. McAULEY.”

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE INSTITUTE IN SCOTLAND.

Mother Elizabeth as Mistress of Novices—In the Transaction of Business—Her regular Observance—Monsignor O'Brien's Estimate of Mother Elizabeth—New Houses—St. Vincent's Orphanage—First House of the Institute in Scotland—Alleged Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin—Mother M. Vincent Hartnett—“Sweet Adare”—Edwin, Earl of Dunraven—Our Lady's Abbey—The Lamp before the Blessed Sacrament—Ennis—A Convent founded at Edinburgh, Scotland—Workhouse Hospital.

MOTHER ELIZABETH'S successful administration was a great consolation to the holy foundress, by whose advice she retained for the present the immediate direction of the novices and postulants. She rarely omitted presiding at their morning lecture or giving the instruction that sometimes replaces it, and she usually read the evening lecture for the whole community; for, like the holy foundress, Mother Elizabeth was a very pleasing reader. When she had to give the lengthened instruction which precedes reception and profession she would arrange for it early in the day, that nothing might interfere with her doing so later. Only those who lived with her could appreciate the amount of self-denial which her exactness to every duty entailed.

By example rather than words she taught her spiritual children to employ their time to the greatest advantage; order and punctuality marked her daily life, and, while always earnest, she never seemed over-anxious. A remarkable forethought guided all her arrangements, and when unexpected occurrences disturbed the usual routine a pro-

vision of substitutes ready to take the parts of principals in the various charges might be confidently relied on. Business and other interruptions often interfered with her own time, but her liberty of spirit never allowed her to be disturbed ; apart from these, she answered every bell like the youngest in the house, and it was admirable to see how she managed so as to be but rarely absent from any community exercise.

That Mother Elizabeth had a noble mind and a great heart appears not only by the perhaps too partial pens of her spiritual daughters, but also by the collective testimony of all who knew her. When she was summoned to Mother McAuley's death-bed in 1841, Bishop Ryan would not allow her to go until she promised to return, so fearful was he of losing one who was the instrument of so much good to his diocese. He thought it probable that, in case of Mother McAuley's death, Mother Elizabeth would be kept at the parent house to succeed her, and he knew that her promise would render any overtures of the kind ineffectual to retain her. But it is not only in her great works and in the traditions of her children that Mother Elizabeth lives. Monsignore O'Brien, who has given us such beautiful recollections of the foundress, and who has for well-nigh half a century been recognized as one of the leading minds in the English-speaking world ; who has been vicar-general, archdeacon, and dean of Limerick ; theological examiner in the Catholic University, and professor of moral theology and Sacred Scripture in All-Hallows College—an author well known in various walks of literature, and a devoted, hard-working ecclesiastic—speaks as follows of this saintly woman :

“Of Mother Elizabeth Moore everything can be said that could be said of devotion untiring, fine conceptions of religious and educational progress, and wonderful success. The record of her life's labor is in the number of grand institutions which she has left the church of Lime-

rick, attended by over seventy nuns, who are models of religious life and saintly sacrifice. She never ceased active thought, and her thoughts were all forecasting and comprehensive. During this last quarter of a century we are convinced that few men or women have existed so many of whose grand thoughts have become facts. She had all the quiet enthusiasm of faith and love, and the calculating prudence that made great enthusiasm great virtue. . . . Those who witnessed her departure, after having summoned the Sisters, as she said, 'to see how a nun can die,' envied while they mourned her."

In April, 1844, Mother Elizabeth, at the request of the Bishop of Cork, opened a convent in Kinsale, and in October of the same year another at Killarney on the invitation of the Bishop of Kerry. To these, her first filiations, we shall again refer.

In 1845 she established the Order at Mallow, where schools were greatly needed. For some years the Sisters occupied a house adjoining the church; but through the exertions of the parish priest, Father Justin McCarthy, and the liberality of the saintly Mr. Goold, a new convent and schools were built on a very pleasant site, not far from the famous springs which have made Mallow such a health-resort for over a century.

There being at one time great danger of proselytism in Back Clare Street and some other Limerick districts, several parochial clergy laid the matter before Mother Elizabeth, who, in response to their representations, established two schools in the outlying parishes, to which she sent Sisters daily. The children crowded to these schools and the danger was happily averted.

In 1850 Mother Elizabeth opened an orphanage on the site now adorned by the beautiful building known as Mount St. Vincent's Orphanage. The Sisters occupied a small, old house, and some out-offices were repaired to accommodate the orphans who were transferred from St. Mary's. God

blessed this poor beginning. A large convent and asylum \* were soon built, in which two hundred and fifty children are trained to habits of industry, and, when ready, are sent to situations specially selected with reference to their respective capacities. Most Rev. Dr. Ryan gave a large donation towards the building, and the good people of Limerick contributed, and have done so annually since, towards the maintenance of the orphans.

In autumn, 1849, Mother Elizabeth went to Glasgow to establish the first house of the Institute in Scotland. She remained two months, trying to arrange internal and external business on a firm basis. A large orphanage was immediately opened here.

The convent at Newcastle West was next established. The bishop and the pastor, Very Rev. Dean Coll, subscribed liberally towards the erection of the fine convent, schools, and House of Mercy which now adorn that once thriving town,† through which the beautiful Arra glides, and which, as the student of history will recall, is famous for the battles fought there in the reign of Elizabeth.

Rathkeale followed in a few months. The convent and a partial endowment were bequeathed to the Sisters by the late pastor, Very Rev. Dr. Walsh.

After Bishop Ryan, Peter Arthur, Esq., stands next among the benefactors of St. Vincent's Asylum, and a wing of that structure appropriately bears his name. The healthy, elevated site in the upper part of the city comprises ten acres. Within the enclosure is an asylum—

\* Mount St. Vincent's, one of the finest conventional establishments in Ireland, was built partly by bequest and partly by subscription. It stands upon a fine site of ten acres, above the crescent in St. Michael's parish. A good deal of attention was drawn to this beautiful institution a couple of years ago on account of the alleged miraculous apparitions—seen by many persons in the vicinity on the Feast of the Assumption, while the children were singing, “Look down, O Mother Mary”—of the Blessed Virgin, enveloped in brilliant radiance, resting on a white cloud upheld by angels, high in the air, above the belt of trees to the north of the convent.

† The word “thriving” can scarcely be applied to any town in Ireland now; the sad consequences of ages of misrule were never more apparent than at present.

analogous to the Cork Orphanage founded by Mr. Murphy —erected and endowed by Rev. William O'Meara, O.S.F., for sixteen widows of good family but in reduced circumstances.

In the autumn of 1853 Mother Elizabeth established a convent at Roscommon, mainly through the liberality of Very Rev. Dr. Madden, Miss Irwin, who joined the Order, and Mrs. Comnee. Roscommon subsequently sent filiations to Athlone and Elphin. As superior she gave the gifted and accomplished Mother M. Vincent Hartnett, one of the most saintly women the foundress ever admitted. Her eminently religious spirit and highly cultured mind qualified her for her new office; indeed, much of the astonishing success of the Limerick house was due to the fine abilities and singular devotedness of this admirable woman.

—R.I.P.

Very Rev. Richard Baptist O'Brien, in an *Eight Days' Retreat for the Sisters of Mercy*,\* thus speaks of Mother Elizabeth and her holy assistant:

“This work was undertaken . . . because of a promise made to two, now no more, who were deeply interested in some such publication, and whom the author respected and revered.

“No one can be more conscious than the author that he adds very little to the ascetic literature in which the Church is so rich, and of which, by God's grace, the religious of Ireland are such beautiful illustrations. He has only embodied the spirit of the Active Orders of his country in a series of exercises which particular circumstances enabled him to write. Among these circumstances, an acquaintance of thirty years with the working and spirit of our institutions was one, and the happiness of over twenty years' intimacy with various holy souls who breathed the very perfection of religious life was another.

\* John F. Fowler, Dublin, 1868.

“ The author had the privilege of an early acquaintance with the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy, and has been all his life more or less intimate with the Institute. He has seen many brilliant specimens of sanctity and learning among the Sisterhood, and he has seen a devotion to the wants of ignorance and poverty which, to thinking people, is as much a miracle of Christian charity as the curing of the blind is a miracle of apostolic power. No one can know, except the few who are able to watch the inner life of religious, how much there is to be found there that eminently unites the other world and this in transcendent grace and the evidence of transcendent divine assistance.

“ The two great women whom the author has taken the liberty of introducing always appeared to him as pre-eminently of the class that ever and ever brought the two worlds together in the minds of those who knew them. . . . Not that they were singular in perfection ; on the contrary, there are many of whom anything he says of the nuns adverted to could with equal truth be spoken. But Mother Elizabeth and Mother M. Vincent have gone to their rest, and can therefore be spoken of with less reserve.

“ It would be quite impossible to imagine anything more perfect than Mother Mary Vincent’s possession of Catherine McAuley’s spirit. She had an unbounded reliance on Providence, such as is inspired for great achievements ; and, as in cases which will easily come to the mind of the reader, the good mother was never disappointed. Then her gentle, loving nature, that knew how to minister to every want but her own, and the large span of allowance she made for peculiarities of character and circumstances in every case that made a difficulty, rendered Mother M. Vincent almost an object of reverential affection to every one. She could hardly see a fault, one would imagine, and she was ever ready with an explanation when she heard a fault named ; so that as a superior she was unlike many, and yet, in some insensible way, her example and her *ideal*

and her prayer raised all who came within reach of her teaching to something above any voluntary fault at last.

“ The writer had the happiness of placing a young and accomplished lady under Mother M. Vincent some twelve years ago. The young creature had been brought up in France and had formed very strict notions of discipline, and, dear child ! had notions quite as strict ‘ of the necessity of discipline for herself.’ She had not been long in Roscommon when she addressed a letter to the writer, expressing great admiration of everything, *but* everything was ‘ too easy to human nature ’ ; she desired something ‘ stricter,’ she was so ‘ strong-willed.’ Recommended to wait and obtain more experience, she assented. The writer afterwards asked her about the ‘ strictness ’ and [whether she wanted] ‘ change,’ etc. ‘ Ah ! no, my father,’ she said. ‘ I find the bridle is indeed of *silk*, but it is *very strong*. ’ She received the black veil on her death-bed, and the transparent beauty of her person, with that large, full, lustrous eye that seems to brighten from the fire consuming the heart, made her look like an angel indeed. It is not given to people to meet many in this world like the mother and the novice. They rest side by side in peace, and, though we may feel sure they pray for us in heaven in the communion of saints, we beg our good Father that they may be in everlasting happiness.

“ It is not too much to say that the author had a religious reverence for Mother M. Vincent during her lifetime, and has great confidence in her prayers to-day. . . . He may add that in Mother M. Vincent’s hands he placed some valuable trusts—to him the most important that could be confided—and he found her in their regard, as in every other regard, a creature after God’s own heart.”

The assistance and prayers and example of this seraphic soul from 1838 to 1853 were not the least powerful factors in consolidating the Limerick foundation.

In 1854 Mother Elizabeth opened a house at Adare, a

village situated on the Maigne, in a rural district of exquisite beauty, immortalized by Gerald Griffin in the well-known song :

“O sweet Adare ! O lovely vale !  
O soft retreat of sylvan splendor !”

This convent was the gift of Edwin, third Earl of Dunsraven, before his lordship's open profession of his conversion to the Catholic faith. Adjoining the parish church stood the ruins of a Trinitarian abbey, which he fitted up for the Sisters under the title of “Our Lady's Abbey.” He received the Sisters on their arrival, and did not leave till he saw the lamp hung up and lighted before the Blessed Sacrament. The window immediately behind the altar is very high, so that the light of the lamp can be seen at a great distance in the darkness of the night. Whenever the earl happened to be returning late to the manor it was to him a source of much happiness and devotional feeling to perceive this sacred flame. As the duties of the Sisterhood increased his lordship enlarged the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Adare,\* and assigned it an endowment.

In May, 1855, Mother Elizabeth established the Sisters of Mercy at Ennis, from which subsequently foundations were made at Middletown and Meriden, Connecticut, United States, Ennistymon in Clare, Singleton in Australia, and

\* Adare was once a place of great importance, and is still rich in the ruins of its former noble institutions. Most of the abbeys, nunneries, and friaries in and about Adare were granted by Queen Elizabeth to a supplanter who bore the suggestive name *Wallop*.

That the Irish *were* not satisfied with visitors who came to them in this brigand style ; that they claimed the right to the free exercise of their own religion—a right which they gladly accorded to the Protestants who fled to their shores for protection in the reign of Mary ; that they at any time sought any share in the administration of their own affairs, etc., has always been deemed preposterous by English historians (?).

Witness among a thousand similar instances the indignation with which Macaulay writes of the Parliament in Dublin which, under James II., 1689, repealed the iniquitous “Act of Settlement,” etc., and endeavored to do a slight and tardy justice to the lineal heirs of those who had been plundered in the preceding invasion. And yet people dignify with the name of “History” the “romance” of this brilliant apologist for dishonesty.

Nokilika in New Zealand. Very Rev. Dean Kenny was the chief instrument in founding the Ennis convent.

In July, 1858, Mother Elizabeth sent a colony to Edinburgh, Scotland. The Sisters began their mission in a small, inconvenient house, but a fine convent was soon erected for them by Mrs. Hutchinson, a fervent convert, who also built an orphanage, which she placed under their care. Sister Mary Loyola Grant entered the Limerick novitiate (1850) for Edinburgh, which she endowed at her profession, but death deprived the prospective establishment of the services of this holy religious in 1854.

In 1861 Mother Elizabeth assumed charge of the work-house hospitals, containing from seven to eight hundred patients. Colonel Monsell, now Lord Emly, and other humane gentlemen, urged this arrangement, that the poor might have proper nursing and kind treatment. The Sisters have access to all parts of the house, and their influence has a most beneficial effect on the poor inmates. A portion of the building adjoining the chapel, with a separate entrance, forms their convent.

The Limerick Poor-Law Guardians were the first who entrusted the care of their sick to religious, 1861, and their example has since been very extensively, or rather universally, followed.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

MOTHER ELIZABETH MOORE.

Limerick Branches—Cholera, 1849—All beg to be sent to the Cholera Hospitals—The Sisters nurse the Plague-stricken Day and Night—Sad Incidents—A ludicrous Mistake—A Woman executed—Heartrending Details—The Sisters watch over the last Hours of Bishop Ryan—His Zeal and Charity—His Love for Children.

THE branch houses added very materially to the cares of Mother Elizabeth; she usually visited them monthly, and was careful, as far as practicable, that all the customs of the mother-house should be carried out in each. To preserve uniformity even in the method of performing ordinary duties she had the Sisters taught when passing from one charge to another, by a few comprehensive directions. But she guarded against embarrassing timid minds by naming precise hours, preferring to say “after lecture” or “before breakfast” to naming the exact time.

In spring, 1849, cholera became epidemic in Limerick. Mother Elizabeth had not forgotten the first appearance of that awful pestilence in Ireland, 1832, nor the heroism of the holy foundress, who, with her early associates, made the cholera hospitals their home during that fearful calamity. On the 4th of March the zealous mother communicated the sad intelligence to the community, and asked for volunteers to attend the poor sufferers. But in this holy cause all were volunteers, and were not even pleased to be asked, since asking seemed to imply a doubt of the universal alacrity to serve the sick at the risk of their lives. When all

was over a Sister sent a rhyming chronicle of the events of the cholera days to a distant community, in which the following occurs, in imaginary response to their mother's question :

“ Why do you ask us, mother dear ?  
What did we seek when we came here ?  
Was it not ever with Him to be  
Who died for us on Calvary ?  
Yes, we are ready ; lead us on  
To work ere this our day is done ! ”

Four Sisters went to Barrington's Hospital and four to St. John's, and they remained over twelve hours in active, constant attendance on the patients. Then the same numbers came to relieve the first detachments, fresh for nursing ; and day and night for over a month they continued this labor. This excessive, continuous fatigue affected them curiously ; the pains in the feet, from having stood so long, were such that on retiring to rest the poor Sisters could not sleep for hours. The bishop's solicitude for them was so earnest that he went himself every day to the hospitals to see them, and not even once during the epidemic did he omit his daily visit to his dear children, the Sisters and the patients. Although all offered themselves for hospital duty, yet if a Sister appeared the least nervous or timorous Mother Elizabeth would not send her, no matter how pressingly she entreated, but would take her as companion when she made her daily rounds to all the wards and patients ; and one such visit was enough to change the most timid into the most fearless. Sister M. Philomena Potter was the martyr of this crisis ; she was selected to enjoy the reward of her devoted ministrations, for the pure love of God, to the sick and dying in Barrington Hospital.

Truly affecting were the scenes of these sad days and sadder nights—parents craving to be restored to their children, and children vainly calling on dead parents. One young mother, though actually dying when brought in, was

still caring for her infant of two years old, who, in blessed unconsciousness of her mother's state, was laughing and crowing and trying all her little wiles to engage her attention as before. When all was over the Sisters brought home the babe, a sweet, fragile child, who, though tended with the most devoted care, pined away and went in her angel purity to heaven.

Another, a strong young girl, who an hour previous had stood in the freshness of health at the railway station—emigrating to America with her parents and family—being the last to enter the train, just as she placed her foot on the step, became powerless, and in a moment the crowd shuddered at the writhings of a cholera patient. A priest who witnessed the scene from the platform offered to have the patient conveyed to the hospital and see that she followed her family after recovery. The unfortunate parents were torn in heart by desires to serve their sick child and to save the rest; but the priest would not allow them, by staying behind, to risk their poor all, invested in their passage tickets, and they were prevailed on to leave their daughter to the Sisters' care. But medical skill and careful nursing were unavailing: she was numbered with the dead before her family reached Liverpool.

Relatives were allowed to see their sick, but the Sisters often besought them not to endanger their own lives unnecessarily; when death took place families were permitted to have the remains conveyed to their respective burial places. A strange circumstance once occurred: an official, in mistake, reported to a husband who had been making eager inquiries that his wife was dead. The widower, half frantic with grief, determined to show his respect and affection for a dutiful partner by investing most of his means in a handsome coffin, fine hearse, etc., for the deceased, and a most elaborate funeral passed out of the hospital gate—the superb coffin containing the remains of a poor woman whom the official had mistaken for the wife of the inquirer.

The genuine sharer of his past joys and sorrows, however, soon rallied, and the unaccountably heartless conduct of her husband and children in neglecting to call on her for many a day was near causing a relapse. When quite recovered she sent for her husband to come and take her home; but he was astounded at the message and refused to go, saying he had buried "his Mary respectably." Both parties were completely mystified. The woman stoutly maintained her identity, and when, at last, the husband was most reluctantly induced to visit her and "take a look," her words were corroborated, and he brought her home in triumph, to the terror of the neighbors and the joy of her little children. But he could not be appeased as to the blunder of the hospital porter. "To think," said he, "that I should have spent all I had in givin' the daacentest funeral that left Limerick during the sickness to a black stranger."

The spring of 1854 saw cholera again in Limerick, but the mortality was not so great, nor did the plague continue so long as in 1849. The Sisters took charge of the cholera hospitals day and night as before, and those detailed to attend the sick in their own homes had their baskets liberally provided with remedies and restoratives, that they might be able to render the necessary aid in case physicians could not be found. Sometimes they found whole families attacked, no one being able to help the rest; these they removed to the hospitals. The ever-zealous Mother Elizabeth inspected all the wards daily, as in the preceding epidemic, though her health had begun to fail, and walking had become difficult owing to a varicose affection in her feet, which, though she rarely yielded to it, was a source of suffering for the rest of her life.

Perhaps the most melancholy scene in which this holy woman was ever engaged was the following ghastly piece of "realism":

At the Assizes a woman was sentenced to death for al-

leged complicity in the murder of her husband. At first she had been arrested on suspicion, but was set free on giving security for her appearance at the trial. Friends advised her to leave the country, but ineffectually, for she thought the forthcoming evidence could not convict her. Hence the verdict of the jury and the resulting sentence broke upon her with a shock that produced the deepest despondency, increased by the remembrance of the opportunity of escape she had failed to improve.

Capital punishment for a crime of this nature is of rarest occurrence in Ireland, and when it does take place scathing ignominy and shame follow the branded name for a century at least. The Sisters found the poor creature utterly inconsolable, nor could they win her thoughts for a moment from the fearful death which was to mark her children and their descendants with public scorn. Mother Elizabeth, seeing the anxiety of the Sisters, determined to go herself; and long did she listen to the outpouring of the poor woman's woe, her grief and terror at the near prospect shutting out the future world completely from her view. Though it be true that most of those who receive capital punishment have already given the same to some innocent neighbor or friend, yet in particular cases, like the present, it is hard to think that a human being could be found to enforce the law. The paroxysms of the poor creature were fearful. Sometimes she would suddenly put her hands about her throat and exclaim: "Oh! then, asthore, isn't it a terrible thing to be hanged like a dog?" Again she would sink into a horrible reverie, and now and then suddenly cry out: "Ah! Sister, would you be satisfied to be hanged yourself?" And then she would wring her hands and sway to and fro in uncontrollable anguish. By the soothing power of prayer Mother Elizabeth calmed her down so considerably as to induce her to listen to a simple course of instruction on the great truths of eternity, and to prepare in a spirit of resignation and repen-

tance for the death that was inevitable. At length, of her own accord, she asked for a priest and made her peace with God. Mother Elizabeth visited her every day, even during the annual retreat, a time exclusively devoted to spiritual exercises. The poor penitent finally accepted death in a spirit of expiation and conformity to the divine will. Happily, fortitude was not indispensable, for to the last she appeared incapable of commanding even a semblance of it. This has been the only instance of the execution of a woman since the establishment of the Sisters in Limerick, 1838.

In 1864 the Limerick community lost its best friend and benefactor, Most Rev. John Ryan, who was called to the reward of his life of devotion to the Church of Christ at the advanced age of eighty-three. For twenty-six years he had been the devoted father of Mother Elizabeth and her communities, and when infirmity confined him entirely to the house it was the privilege of the Sisters to visit him frequently, and they were kneeling by his bedside in prayer when his holy soul passed from its earthly prison to the presence of God. Dr. Ryan was among the last of the bishops of the old school, contemporary with many great names—Troy, Plunket, Coppinger, Doyle, Murray, Curtis, Crolly, etc. He was a simple, mild, unobtrusive man, during whose wise and gentle administration the diocese confided to his care advanced with giant strides. His esteem for her children made the foundress more than grateful to him, and she was inexpressibly touched to learn that he stinted himself of comforts, and even of necessaries, that he might be able to help Mother Elizabeth to consolidate the great institutions she originated in his diocese. Scarcely a shop-boy in Limerick who was not better dressed than the bishop; his clothing, though clean, was seedy and scanty; he was known to the prisoners, and in the hospitals the patients eagerly looked out for his cheering visits. He was always laden with trifles to bestow on

his poor friends—beads, medals, prayer-books, story-books ; he had a souvenir for every one he met, and he had a special zeal for the poor little street-urchins, whom he loved to attract to school by supplies of candy and sugar-plums and “bright pennies.” It was a joy to the venerable man to be surrounded by the street Arabs, and he was proud of the fact that no child in Limerick was afraid to approach “the poor old bishop.” Quite the contrary : he was the children’s idol, as will be readily believed ; he loved to hide himself in the playground of St. Mary’s and other schools just at the hour of dismissal, and from his ambush pelt his little friends with the small, transparent cubes of sugar-candy known as bull’s-eyes. With all his simplicity he was a great and holy man, judging merely by his marvellously successful episcopate ; to the Order of Mercy he was a generous benefactor in life and death. He had the most exalted idea of the sanctity of Mother Elizabeth, and her fitness, despite a reputation for severity, or rather exactness, not wholly undeserved, to train up in the higher paths of asceticism the young souls who chose her for their guide and model in the spiritual life. Her greatness of soul and strength of character, he knew, made her equal to any emergency, for things were great in her eyes in proportion as they were useful for the advancement of the divine honor, and she undertook whatever she believed God required of her ; nor would she easily relinquish anything thus begun, however vast the difficulties that attended its execution. And the bishop ably seconded her efforts.—R.I.P.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

“ MARKED OUT FOR A GREAT END.”

Personal History of Mother Elizabeth—Marked out for a great End—Directed by Dr. Blake—A Catechist—Vocation—Surmises—Large Donation from Dr. Blake—Particular Attachments—Tendency perfectly corrected, if it ever existed—The Postulant at the Cholera Hospital—She receives the holy Habit October 8, 1832—Personal Appearance—Education—Love of Music—A delightful Novitiate—Extraordinary Timidity of Mother Elizabeth—Her Strictness—Her Mode of Acting—Instances.

FOR the edification and example of many we shall here give what we have gathered from the children of Mother Elizabeth, and what, in the phraseology of an earlier day, would be called her “character.” And first we shall touch upon her personal history.

Although we have enlarged on the works which this valiant woman left as her enduring monument, it would be an injustice to our readers to fail to set before them a somewhat detailed account of one whom God so evidently raised up to do grand things in His Church for His glory and the salvation of souls. Mother Elizabeth will remain for ever an accomplished model of the perfection peculiar to the Institute, to whose members, especially those of the twelve houses which she founded, she may say with St. Paul to his disciples: “Be ye imitators of me, as I also am of Christ.”

Anne Moore, daughter of James and Catherine Moore, of St. James’s Parish, Dublin, was born on Pentecost Sunday, 1806, and was the only one of their children who survived the perils of infancy. Her parents were of respectable position and had good connections in and about Dub-

lin. In her seventh year she lost her father, and much of her early life was passed with her maternal grandmother, a penetrating old lady, who saw something in the little girl quite different from other children. On one occasion she with great solemnity laid her hand upon Anne's pretty little head and fervently exclaimed: “May God bless you, my child! You seem marked out for a great end.”

As convent boarding-schools were almost unknown in Ireland in those times, Anne's education was completed at a ladies' seminary conducted by “the Misses Reynolds.” As a young lady she regulated her works of benevolence by the advice of her confessor and life-long friend, Dr. Blake, who, by a curious coincidence, was also the spiritual director of the future foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. He desired that Anne should train herself in a special manner for a catechist, and made her president of the Sunday-school which he established in the parish of SS. Michael and John's.

Her vocation to a religious life in an Order specially devoted to the poor soon became apparent, and she entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Charity in Stanhope Street. It is likely she took this step by the advice of a strange confessor and in the absence of Dr. Blake, who was in Rome from 1824 to 1828, reorganizing the Irish College, which had been suppressed during the French occupation of the Eternal City. For Dr. Blake would, in all probability, have sent her to his friend Miss McAuley, whose projected Institute he thought would prove more congenial to Miss Moore.

The Sisters of Charity, however, were not the religious among whom Anne Moore was to achieve the great end which her grandmother had prophesied for her. Why she left Stanhope Street she never told her children. It was said that the excessive partiality she showed to the mistress of novices, who happened to be the accomplished Mary Aikenhead, raised fears in the minds of those who had to

decide her vocation that her tendency was to cling unduly to individuals, in defiance of the great principle of conventional life which excludes such particular attachments as are calculated to weaken universal charity. It was said, too, that Anne Moore left Stanhope Street because she felt a preference for the more monastic ways of the newly-founded Order of Mercy, and desired to be in an Institute in which the Office of the Blessed Virgin was daily chanted, yet the Sisters uncloistered, so as to be able to visit the sick. If this be so, then the Order of Mercy is the only Order that could have satisfied all her cravings, since in its daily exercises and internal arrangements a Convent of Mercy is but a convent of the olden time, with such duties added as require the Sisters to be uncloistered ; or rather, perhaps, what a convent was before the Church found it necessary to enact laws of enclosure.\* These reasons, no doubt, converged towards the end which an all-ruling Providence had in view, but there is also some reason to believe that Anne was sent home because the fortune she expected was not forthcoming—and it was a general rule in Ireland, and is still to a great extent, that the interest of her inheritance should be equivalent to the support of every lady that proposes to enter a convent.

Early in 1832 Dr. Blake spoke to Mother McAuley, merely in a tentative way, of a young lady every way qualified to become a religious, but who was unable to bring

\* "Though the laws of enclosure are not compatible with the duties of our Institute, the spirit of enclosure is, and it should be entertained and cherished among us, and should serve as our grate and cloister. *We* are consecrated to God by vows unto death as well as those religious on whom strict enclosure is enjoined, and nothing but the duty we owe to God and our neighbor should bring us again into contact with the world we have for ever renounced. Those who cultivate the spirit of enclosure most strictly, at the same time proving by the effectual performance of the duties of the congregation that it is perfectly compatible with their efficient discharge, are the firmest supporters of our beloved Institute, and the best bulwark against that pernicious freedom the ill-effects of which amongst religious was the first cause that rendered it necessary to have the laws of enclosure enacted by the Church" (*Guide for the Religious called Sisters of Mercy*).

the required dowry. Mother McAuley immediately offered to give her a trial, remarking that any one Dr. Blake sent must bring a blessing on the house. Next day he rang the door-bell and handed the portress seven hundred pounds \* just given him by a dying basket-maker, saying: “Your mother will make a better use of this money than I.” It is almost beyond doubt—in fact, it is quite so—that the young lady here referred to was Miss Anne Moore.

Anne Moore entered St. Mary’s Novitiate on her twenty-sixth birthday, Pentecost Sunday, June 10, 1832. It was characteristic of the new postulant that she entered at the height of the dreadful epidemic known as the Asiatic cholera, which was then making its first tour of Ireland, knowing that her services would be immediately enlisted for the cholera patients.

Not the smallest inclination to particular attachments ever appeared in the future foundress of the Order of Mercy in Limerick. If ever she had been disposed to such special manifestations of affection or esteem, she overcame herself so perfectly as to leave no trace of the tendency behind. As superior she forcibly inculcated that the Sisters should love all associated with them in the religious life in God and for God, not yielding to mere natural feelings of predilection or preference for the more attractive to the prejudice of the less attractive, but acting under all circumstances with that cautious charity which woundeth not.

If, then, Mother Aikenhead and her advisers deemed Anne Moore to be subject to this inconvenience to a degree that might endanger her perseverance, we may believe that such misunderstanding of her real character on the part of persons influenced by wise and prudent motives was

\* A striking instance of Dr. Blake’s generosity; for he was then building the new parochial church in Westland Row, and had great difficulty in prevailing on the parishioners to co-operate with him, as they had already contributed largely towards making an addition to their old church on Townsend Street.

permitted by God, that she might reach her destined sphere in the Lord's vineyard—a far larger one than would probably have fallen to her lot had she remained with the good daughters of Mary Aikenhead, for whom, nevertheless, she always entertained a sincere esteem.

Sister Anne was taken by the foundress to the cholera hospital on Townsend Street, and the impression made on her by the appalling wretchedness of the sufferers and the intense devotedness of the Sisterhood was never effaced. To the end of her life she could not revert to these days and the scenes she witnessed without emotion. When the sad story repeated itself in Limerick in 1849 and 1854 Mother Elizabeth and her daughters re-enacted the heroism of earlier days.

After three months' trial it was decided that Anne might receive the holy habit, which she did October 8, the Feast of St. Brigid of Sweden, 1832. The reception, the second ceremony of the kind in the Institute, and the first public one, was largely attended. Miss Moore had been most anxious to witness the reception of the First Seven, January 23, 1832, but in consequence of the dying condition of Sister Anna O'Grady that ceremony was strictly private, to the great disappointment of Anne, who was attracted to the Sisters of Mercy from the first, though, in obedience to her director, she had entered a similar Institute.

Anne Moore was tall and slight in person, her complexion pale almost to sallowness, her face smooth and marble-like, her brows slightly marked, and her smile, though rare, remarkably sweet. Her dark gray eyes were seldom raised, though it was well known that anything needing attention never escaped her notice. Her education was such as was universal at the time for girls of her station: a good knowledge of English, which she spoke perfectly and wrote with ease and grace; a fair knowledge of French, which enabled her to enjoy the best French authors in the original; as much arithmetic as was then

considered necessary for young ladies, which was very little indeed, and a knowledge of music, which made her an agreeable guest in the drawing-room; she sang very sweetly, and accompanied her melodies with the best harmony that could be evolved from the modestly-endowed piano by a performer of great taste who had not devoted *all* her spare time to music. Like all Mother McAuley's associates, she delighted in music, vocal and instrumental; and though she rarely touched an instrument after the burden of office was laid upon her shoulders, she encouraged the study of music in others, and enjoyed it to the end of her life.

On receiving the white veil Anne chose for her patroness St. Elizabeth of Hungary, so celebrated for deeds of charity. The holy foundress hoped, no doubt, that the new *Elizabeth* would revive among the Sisterhood tender recollections of the sanctity of their sweet young companion, Sister Mary Elizabeth Harley, who had departed to a brighter world in the joyous Easter-time just six months before, and indemnify them for the loss of one so dear and so valued.

A more propitious period of novitiate than that enjoyed by our novice has never fallen to the lot of a Sister of Mercy, for the foundress herself was the novice-mistress from 1831 to 1835. As the Institute was in its infancy, she retained the direction of the young Sisters for about four years and formed them all to the principles and duties of the religious life. The Rules were not yet committed to writing, but they were embodied in her instructions and exemplified in her daily life. It goes without saying that this eminent woman was specially skilled in discerning character and moulding fine natural traits to perfection, in bringing under subjection everything that might prove a hindrance in promoting God's glory and gaining souls to Him.

After two years' novitiate, Sister M. Elizabeth was professed, October 8, 1834; three years later she succeeded

Mother Josephine Warde as superioress of the Kingstown convent, and in 1838 she was sent to Limerick.

The extraordinary timidity which Mother Elizabeth showed on being invested with the office of superior surprised all who knew her, and none more than the foundress, who knew her best. We have already alluded to the difficulty which the holy mother found in prevailing on her children to accept this office, but, with Tullamore, Charleville, Carlow, and Cork fresh in her reminiscences, she writes : "We never sent out such a faint-hearted soldier as Sister M. Elizabeth."

In fact, the prospect of leaving Baggot Street for ever, and having to plant the Institute in a new soil, and the responsibility all this involved, so completely overpowered her that she was no more fit than an infant for the transaction of business. Seeing one of her bravest so entirely unmanned—if the expression be allowed here—was almost enough to cause the holy foundress to relinquish her design. But, no ! She felt that Sister M. Elizabeth was largely endowed with the qualities necessary for this undertaking, and to no one else would she commit it. So she waited patiently till the first alarms were calmed, but she was obliged to stay three months in Limerick, arranging all the preliminary business, and it was with difficulty she could get away even then. There was no help for it now—Mother Elizabeth had to go on, and she succeeded; but to her latest hour she realized in the depths of her soul that all her sufficiency was from God, and her future life was a realization of the motto engraven on her ring :

"I CAN DO ALL THINGS IN HIM THAT STRENGTHENETH ME."

The bishop encouraged all her exertions to advance religion, industry, and education, and Providence directed to her community able and efficient members. She herself left nothing undone to cultivate the field allotted to her,

and she had the consolation of seeing her efforts blessed by a rich and abundant harvest of souls. The holy foundress was overjoyed at the success of the Limerick house, which was, indeed, but a verification of her own prophetic words: “My visit to Limerick,” she writes, “will animate me. I need scarcely tell you that it will be a source of great happiness, for which I shall thank God—a pure, heartfelt friendship which renews the powers of mind and body.” And again: “I could not recollect any circumstance that inflicted such disappointment on me as not going to Limerick before my return, and I suppose it is for this very reason I was not permitted to go, because I wished it too ardently.”

Thus began the thirty years Mother Elizabeth spent in extending the kingdom of Christ. “God alone” was her motto and her end. The combined qualities of heart and head which formed her character, and her noble, conscientious views of duty, all tended to Him whom she loved. Nothing that related to His service was trifling in her eyes, and she desired that the least action done for Him should be done with a perfection suitable to His greatness. A vocation to the immediate service of God and His poor she regarded as an inestimable blessing; hence she enlarged on its advantages and obligations, and sought to stimulate each Sister to great fidelity, that, all being pliant instruments in God’s hands, they might continually promote His glory and the salvation of souls.

Mother Elizabeth attached the greatest importance to the Sisters cultivating an interior spirit from the very beginning; for this produces correspondence with grace and fidelity in the discharge of external duties. She thought little of a more than ordinary application to prayer in a person whose actions proved her deficient in that self-renunciation which always accompanies true devotion. She laid much stress on the Sisters applying earnestly and profitably to meditation. Occasionally, in the course

of the day, she would, as if for her own assistance, ask any Sister she met for some point or reflection from the morning's meditation. If the answer were vague or foreign to the subject she usually made no comment, but the question had the intended effect of causing the individual to use more system and draw some special fruit from each meditation in future.

Mother Elizabeth always seemed to walk in the divine presence, and thus she was able, amid unceasing business and distracting cares, to arrange all things with system. She desired the Sisters to cultivate that sense of God's presence which, without leading to abstraction, would preserve that wise, humble self-possession which serves to regulate the whole exterior.

Solid, reverent piety was the root whence she expected self-sacrificing zeal for God and for souls, and the exactness and perseverance necessary for performing well the duties of the Institute. She endeavored to arrange that the spiritual exercises of the community should not be sacrificed to any others ; but if a Sister was obliged to be absent from any of those made in common she should make it in private. Her instructions were clear, concise, and to the point, and they so impressed the auditors that they felt as if every word she said was engraven on their minds. Solidity and stability, works rather than words or sentiments—here was Mother Elizabeth's doctrine. Her voice, though deep, was very pleasing and gave her words an import and an influence not soon forgotten. Even strangers, and persons not of the household of the faith, remarked how she impressed them by a few simple, pithy words which conveyed some of the deep thoughts regarding a future world which lay hidden in her soul. Thus a Protestant bishop, who called at the convent to examine some relic of antiquity in the vicinity, related the impression made on him at a previous visit, when he came on other business. In the course of conversation he remarked : " You have a

great deal of work going on here, madame." "Yes, my lord," she replied calmly; "we work here, and we rest there," pointing to the little cemetery which was in view from the windows of the apartment.

Mother Elizabeth conversed well and was a most attentive listener. Her laugh was little more than audible, though it evidently came from her heart. "Her movements," says a Sister who lived with her for thirty years, "were almost noiseless, so that her fine, well-proportioned figure was seen before she was heard. She had that holy, calm comportment and expression which won reverence and esteem from the most casual observer, leaving the impression that hers was a holy, humble soul, whose kindness and friendship were sincere, and greatest where most needed."

First acquaintance with Mother Elizabeth sometimes won confidence and affection which remained to the last; at other times only esteem for her religious manners and straightforwardness. Some she inspired with awe. But, whether grave or cordial, winning or serious, all agreed that there was in her whole bearing a marked absence of self-importance or self-sufficiency. It was beautifully said of Mother Elizabeth by a keen observer that there was an easy dignity in her bearing which "suited her to train princesses to the religious life." Without being absorbed, she had that recollection which springs from a continual sense of the divine presence. Her conversation was cautiously charitable, and though human respect could never influence her when she deemed firmness a duty, yet she strove to do a disagreeable thing as sweetly as possible, nor would she intentionally give pain to any one.

Mother Elizabeth was aware that an idea of strictness was associated with her name, but she continued the course she had conscientiously adopted, and those who exercised her patience and thwarted her views ultimately became the greatest admirers of her upright and heroic conduct, which

disregarded all personal considerations where the interests of religion and the spiritual advancement of her subjects were concerned. The calm, forbearing charity which restrained her from wounding the feelings of those who acted so unjustly was rewarded by years of subsequent esteem and an enthusiastic recognition of her wise and holy motives.

With religious orders in her locality she maintained a most friendly relation ; and if, on her foundations, she was invited to visit other communities, she did so to establish a mutual feeling of cordiality. A Sister who lived with her many years gives a testimony in her favor which, according to St. Mary Magdalen di Pazzi, would fit her for canonization : "Mother Elizabeth never left it in the power of any one to repeat a word of hers which could enkindle prejudice or cause misunderstanding or pain."

Many persons had a right to preference from herself and her community, yet she prudently instructed the inexperienced among her children to be cautious in showing *that* to others, and to be gracious and grateful to every one for services rendered in any way to the Order. She was reserved in answering questions regarding her community which she deemed indiscreet, saying she considered such inquiries in the same light as they would be regarded if put to private families, however usage had sanctioned them with reference to religious. She could, however, enjoy a little jest played on some new arrival in the city, who was told to go to the convent and ask Madame Moore such and such questions about her Sisters—such delicate questionings being extremely gratifying to her.

Mother Elizabeth attached great importance to order as to time and place, and to the devoted discharge of duty she would have nothing wanting. "Give yourselves unreservedly to God," she would say to the Sisters ; "refuse Him no sacrifice ; employ faithfully the talents He has given you, and leave nothing undone to promote His

work.” She wished each to cultivate her abilities as far as needful for the efficient discharge of the duties of the Institute; so that they might bear fruit a hundred-fold for the glory of the great Giver. She delighted in seeing those endowed with more than ordinary intellectual and natural gifts, and, humanly speaking, very competent to advance God’s work, unconscious of such advantages and going on simply and naturally. Occasionally she encouraged all, but she seldom brought individuals forward in any marked way; feeling, no doubt, that virtue, whether strong or weak, is safest when let alone. She rarely spoke of herself except when relating some pleasant occurrence for the general amusement. The heaven-inspired trait of rejoicing cordially in the success of others had a charm in her eyes which endeared its possessors very much to her heart. Hence she valued highly the labors of those who gracefully gave great merit to their companions, especially when less gifted than themselves. Her deep knowledge of human nature in its fallen state made her ever anxious to see humility exercised by all, the most advanced as well as the least.

As far as she could Mother Elizabeth concealed the pecuniary circumstances under which Sisters entered, and when circumstances caused these to be generally known she would allow no mention of the subject in conversation. When she ceased to have charge of the novices (1843) she directed the novice mistress to have all supplied with clothing of the very same kind; and when they entered she had everything removed from their respective wardrobes that could indicate wealth or poverty in the families from which they had come.

Mother Elizabeth assiduously cultivated the community spirit among her children; all were to labor with head, heart, and hand to make God better known, loved, and served; their individuality was to be merged into, or lost, as it were, under the glorious title of **SISTERS OF MERCY**;

no claims, no exemptions were allowed, all being dependent on the charity of the Order for what necessity required. She taught her children that true happiness is to be found in that conformity to Jesus crucified which predestines to eternal life, and sought to inspire them with that idea of perfection which would always prompt them to act in a manner worthy of the great Master whom they serve. Her solicitude for their spiritual advancement increased in proportion as she discerned fine qualities in them and great designs of God in their regard ; hence her quick perception of slight errors in those who, by the cultivation of a more interior spirit, could walk in more perfect ways.

Yet none could estimate more highly the virtue of her children in the various ways in which she saw it exercised. Her allowances for human frailty were greater than those of many less strict with self ; but deliberate faults, however trifling, she would not tolerate. When the Sisters went to her in their difficulties she was most soothing, and was glad to learn from themselves rather than from others any want of punctuality, deviation from custom, or neglect of duty into which they might have been betrayed. But self-will and self-righteousness were severely dealt with ; she desired that they should submit sweetly to correction, and cultivate that candor and openness of heart which render their correction and direction so easy. Her tender, affectionate nature was best seen when God visited them with sickness or sorrow ; then it was that they fully realized the depths of their mother's love.

Mother Elizabeth took special pains to make the community recreation a time of enjoyment. She would not allow Sisters during that time to write, or correct the exercises of their pupils, or enter on business details that could be deferred. Yet, as it has been customary from the beginning for Sisters to work at recreation, she kept strictly to the work allowed by the mother-foundress—plain or ornamental needlework, knitting, or some other simple

work that occupied the fingers but left the mind free. She always contrived to have some puzzle, riddle, or other intricacy to enliven still more the joyous hours allotted for the unbending of the mind. The seniors were encouraged to enter into the little amusements of the juniors, and all were required to practise kind considerateness for each other's feelings and that simple, easy refinement of manner characteristic of good breeding.

Mother Elizabeth wished that all, whether walking, talking, or working, should form but one party, and was pleased when the Sisters mingled some pious conversation in their innocent mirth. When a new hymn was sung she appeared to be so taken with the words that she would have a young Sister near repeat them a few times, that she might commit them to memory as a source of thought and comfort during her sleepless nights. Sometimes the Sisters would all crowd around her chair and ask her to tell of the early days of the Order, and she would then relate something that showed how the spirit of mercy ever animated the saintly foundress, thus communicating to her children the love and veneration so deep in her own heart for that great mother whose every practice, sentiment, and view were cherished in her retentive memory with an undying love and an indescribable reverence.

During the August and December retreats the good mother carefully pointed out the hourly opportunities presented in the life of a Sister of Mercy of practising self-denial, overcoming passion and caprice, and becoming more fit instruments to promote God's glory. For the first thirty years of its existence it was seldom that communities of the Mercy Institute had priests to conduct their retreats. But the distribution of retreat-time, and the subject-matter of the meditations, examens, considerations, and spiritual reading arranged by the holy foundress, were so fully adequate to their spiritual wants that the retreats were found to be unusually fruitful. This was especially

the case when the instructions were given by Mother Elizabeth and other early members who had made retreats under the guidance of the holy foundress.

Mother Elizabeth was very severe in correcting a taste for hearing or repeating news; she required as a condition of perseverance in her community that such avenues to worldliness should be closed and never reopened. The friendships she formed stood the tests of time and trial, and those once her friends have continued as sincere admirers of her noble, conscientious soul as though it were but yesterday they experienced her kindness. Weighing everything according to God's standard, she never allowed praise to elate her, and she even feared lest the affection the Sisters showed her should become merely natural. In no convent did subjects ever look upon their superior with more reverence and love, or appreciate more highly her claims to their gratitude. Four times, at the request of the Sisters, did the saintly Bishop Ryan obtain a rescript from the Holy See to make her eligible for their votes, so that she governed them for twenty-four years consecutively; and when unable, because of her advanced age and failing health, to continue first superior, they insisted that at least she should remain over them as mother-assistant, which office she filled from her resignation of the superiority till her death.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### HOLY DEATH OF MOTHER ELIZABETH.

Mother Elizabeth released from Office—In a subordinate Position—Meeting of the elder Superiors—Guide—Last Years of Mother Elizabeth's Life—Visit to Tipperary Convent—Returns in a dying State—Edifying Details—Intense Fear of Death in one who had borne the Yoke of the Lord from Youth—Its Removal due to Prayer—Last Words.

IN 1862 Mother Elizabeth, whose health was now completely shattered, obtained the blessing she had long craved—release from the weighty responsibility of superior—and then, more than ever, her grand religious spirit showed itself; for she taught her children by example what she had hitherto inculcated by precept, and showed herself as great a proficient in the art of obeying as she had been in the art of governing. A model of childlike simplicity towards her new superior, Mother Clare McNamara, she took the same interest as formerly in forwarding every good work, trying to make herself useful in every way, yet not interfering unduly in anything. The Sisters frequently remarked the striking pattern of every virtue she exhibited during the six years she survived; her zeal for God's glory was in no way lessened, and, though her power of actively extending it diminished with her health, she was always engaged in something useful until quite incapacitated by her last illness.

Her successor showed her the most uniform love and deference, and would never address her but as "reverend mother," acting towards the guide who had formed her to

the religious life with all the veneration and affection of a loving child ; and in this respect every Sister of the community, numbering over seventy nuns, emulated the sweet example of the wise and humble religious whom God had willed to assume their old mother's place.

Indeed, Mother Elizabeth was universally respected for herself rather than her office, as was clearly proved after her resignation had been most unwillingly accepted. When the first, and so far the only, general chapter of the congregation was held in 1864, nineteen of the older and more important houses being represented, she was unanimously chosen to preside, although not then filling the office of superior.

The decisions of this meeting have been printed in the *Abridged Edition of the Guide for the Sisters of Mercy*, a very instructive work.

The delicacy of years under the pressure of increasing care had completely undermined Mother Elizabeth's naturally strong constitution ; there was emphatically what is called a *general break-up* in the whole system, and in reply to inquiries concerning her health she would playfully say : "Considering that the whole machine is past repair, I get on wonderfully well, and may hobble on a few years yet." For a long time she had been subject to a swelling in her feet, the only relief for which was rest. "My understanding has again rebelled," she would say pleasantly, "and I have been ordered to keep still"; but the mind was active to the last. She employed her leisure compiling and dictating to a Sister a simple method of instruction on each of the thirty chapters of Butler's Catechism. In the earlier stages of her troublesome illness, whenever the physicians ordered her to remain quiet for a day or so, it used to be remarked that when she resumed her accustomed cares some one apartment became a more special object of supervision, thus showing how, in the interval of bodily rest, her comprehensive mind had been planning something more to

further God's interests and ameliorate the sufferings of the afflicted.

When the Sisters told her of the trials and sufferings that came under their observation while visiting the sick, her eyes filled with tears, and to know that something was done for their relief was a heartfelt pleasure to her, though her resources had never permitted her to be as liberal as her great heart prompted. Still deeper was the interest she took in souls, and when she heard of souls in danger she could not rest till everything her zeal suggested was done to rescue them. The people of Limerick still gratefully remember how heartily and effectively she threw herself and her Sisters into the grand work of ministering day and night to the bodies and souls of the thousands stricken during the awful visitation of the cholera.

In 1865 Mother Elizabeth was sent for some weeks to Tipperary, where a convent had been founded in autumn, 1864. She returned improved by the change, and at once resumed the supervision of a large quantity of needlework which gave remunerative employment to the grown orphans and many externs in distressed circumstances. During the two years the contract lasted she examined every article, and if she found any want of neatness she would have it undone and made over again. In the industrial education of the children she had always shown the deepest interest. In the early years of her administration two teachers of Valenciennes lace from Belgium were employed by her, and at considerable cost she had cushions, patterns, etc., supplied for a large number of girls who showed aptitude for making this delicate texture. She also gave much encouragement to the making of the beautiful fabric known as Limerick lace. But the interest she evinced in all that could assist and elevate God's dear poor never interfered with her duties as mother-assistant, and, unless seriously ill, she was always present at the community exercises.

In the summer of 1867 her health became very preca-

rious. A dropsical tendency appeared in her feet, but, despite her alarming debility, the community hoped there was no danger. So fearful were they of losing their precious mother that they would not believe in the seriousness of her maladies. Change of air, which had proved beneficial two years before, was tried again. On the 19th of December Mother Clare brought her to the Tipperary convent, leaving all at St. Mary's full of anxious hope that when she returned on the 7th of January, the limit of the visit, their beloved mother would be materially improved.

Mother Elizabeth went through the retreat the last three days of the year, and so anxious was she not to miss any exercise that the Sisters had to assemble in the infirmary for the lectures, etc., whenever the invalid was unable to rise. She made her renovation of vows in choir on New Year's day with unusual impressiveness. A letter to St. Mary's stated that she would return January 3, but assigned no reason. She felt that she was dying, but forbore to give the Sisters the pain of hearing it; yet when she stepped across the threshold for the last time they saw a change for which they were utterly unprepared.

Masses, novenas, and prayers were offered for her recovery. On Sunday, January 6, she went down-stairs with great effort, and was present at Mass in choir for the last time. On the 9th she begged to receive Extreme Unction and Holy Viaticum, and Most Rev. Dr. Butler kindly administered them himself. She was reclining in an easy-chair; the Sisters, with church cloaks on and holding lighted tapers, knelt around her. She fully understood how trying this scene was to all, so she said none were to be present who could not assist with a composed, happy countenance; and this sufficed to make them struggle hard to keep back their tears. From that day she often received Holy Communion, and the bishop offered the Holy Sacrifice in her cell almost every day; he also wrote to his clergy throughout the diocese, asking Masses and prayers

for the dying religious to whom the diocese he governed owed so much.

That the beloved patient suffered much from congestion of the heart and liver was indicated by a deep purple hue which occasionally overspread her pallid face. Her sleep was only for short intervals, but so calm that the anxious watchers used often lean down to ascertain if she still breathed. Towards evening on the 18th power of motion failed in her right hand, and she was unable to take any nourishment. Later on she gave some words of advice with her wonted clearness, and two or three times she asked the hour. On hearing twelve strike she expressed great delight that her last day had come, for she always had a presentiment that she would die on her specially-loved Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus. At one the Sisters were reciting the litanies ; but she rallied. At five she sank into a kind of stupor, but was conscious of their presence. Towards seven she revived so much that she asked for the Holy Viaticum, but it was with great difficulty and by the aid of a little water that she was able to receive. Throughout the day she was dying, calmly and prayerfully. Many ecclesiastics visited her. It was so distressing to listen to her labored breathing that one of the Sisters whispered : " Dear mother, could you not cough ? The phlegm is choking you." " No, dear," she replied ; " I am dying." Shortly after she turned to Mother Clare and said, " Now I am dying " ; and about ten minutes after, at twenty minutes to three, her holy soul passed to the presence of its God.

In this awful bereavement Mother Clare was murmuring to herself prayers for the departing spirit of her whom she so tenderly loved, apparently unconscious of all else, and the weeping Sisters were breathing their aspirations so as not to disturb the solemn silence of death. At length a Sister began to recite aloud the prayers for the departed, and all joined in the response for her eternal repose.

Nothing could exceed the patience and sweetness of Mother Elizabeth in her illness. She never complained or found fault with anything; her chief anxiety was for the comfort of those attending her. During life the holy mother had a dread of death which she could not overcome, but she told Mother Clare that all that had vanished on the previous feast of her holy patroness, November 19—a grace she attributed to the many Masses and prayers offered for her on that occasion.

The day before her death Mother Elizabeth asked the doctor whether she could survive another week, and on his replying in the affirmative disappointment was visible on her countenance.

To the last her spirit of prayer continued; she was often heard whispering to her “dear Jesus,” and she would smile sweetly and say, as if in response to something unheard by her children, “Do, do, do, O sweet Jesus!” but what this implied no one knew. When unable to pray she said to a Sister, “Animate me”; and when the Sister whispered in her ear, “My Jesus, I resign my life and death entirely into Thy hands,” she said, “Oh! I do; Thou knowest I do, O my God! from the depths of my heart.” Any aspiration of thanksgiving always gave her special pleasure.

Mother Elizabeth told her superior that she had never had such a *sense* of the majesty and sanctity of God as during her last illness. The community prayers, rosary, litanies, etc., were daily recited beside her; and one day, when something occurred which caused the rosary to be omitted, she was uneasy and begged to have it begun before another day dawned.

The obstruction of the heart’s action caused agonies to the saintly invalid and to those who witnessed without power to allay them. Some external application relieved the intense pain in her side, but the pain in her heart could be relieved only by prayer.

Mother Elizabeth usually addressed the superior, lately

her spiritual child, as "darling mother"; and often after Communion she was heard invoking blessings on her "darling mother and Sisters." Day and night two Sisters were always with her, and one of the privileged two was either Mother Clare, the superior, or Mother M. Baptist Purcell, who had been bursar for twenty-four years. During intervals of ease in the last week the professed Sisters went individually to ask her blessing, and as her wasted hand rested affectionately on the head of each she earnestly besought God to bless her.

Mother Clare asked her to pray especially for the houses she had founded, and the other houses that, by letters and assurances of prayers, had given such consolation during her illness. The dying nun implored God to send His Holy Spirit on them, and prayed that charity and humility might reign among their members until, after faithful perseverance in His holy service, they should arrive at eternal life.

To the novices she said: "Avoid small faults, attend to little things, and cultivate great purity of heart." More could be told which must be passed over, but from this little can be formed an idea of what that nun was in death who in life had been so habitually united to God and in all things had worked for Him alone.

For long after the departure of this cherished and beloved mother deep sorrow hung about her children. Few have ever gone to their eternal reward whose sterling worth and inestimable services in the cause of God and the poor have been so highly valued. Every one said emphatically that she did her work well, and, while extending Christ's kingdom in her long labor of love, the humility which made her ever feel she was but a feeble instrument in the hands of the Most High cast about her an additional lustre. Many convents besides those she founded resounded with prayers that God would restore her to her loving children for a little while longer, and that, amid the

pains, weariness, and temptations of an excruciating illness, she might keep unsullied to the end the whiteness of her beautiful soul. Scarcely a priest in the diocese failed to offer Masses for her recovery until her case became hopeless, when their intention was changed for a happy death. After her departure priests came in great numbers to celebrate the divine Mysteries, for the speedy admission of her soul to the Beatific Vision, in the convent home for thirty years blessed and sanctified by her presence and her works.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE LIMERICK FOUNDATION, CONCLUDED.

Obsequies—Something of the *antique* in Mother Elizabeth—Letters of Condolence—Spirit of Mother M. Elizabeth—Her Views on various Subjects—Her Love of the community Spirit—At Recreation—Retreats—Hymns and Music—Mother Elizabeth as a *Raconteuse*—Her Dislike of News mongers—The Love and Esteem the Sisters bore her—They obtain four Dispensations to elect her as Superior—Obliged at last by Ill health to lay down the Burden—Characteristics—Adventure—Pleasant Incidents.

MOST REV. GEORGE BUTLER, the venerated successor of Mother Elizabeth's enthusiastic friend and kind father, Bishop Ryan, presided at her obsequies, which assembled at St. Mary's the greatest number of ecclesiastics, religious and secular, ever seen together in Limerick. The Sisters who could be spared from the branch houses swelled the mournful procession of rich and poor, learned and ignorant, lay and cleric that conveyed the mortal remains of Mother Elizabeth to their last resting-place on earth.

Her children thought of raising a mortuary chapel over her sacred remains to perpetuate still more her venerable memory; but they submitted to the better judgment of those who found the cemetery too small for such a building. A handsome Celtic cross was chosen instead, upon the base of which are inscribed her name and some records of her life. A beautiful weeping willow casts a sombre shade over the hallowed spot. Her resting-place in the ancient abbey grounds is well chosen; it becomes her character, her career, and her spirit. There was something

*antique* about this great woman—something so opposite to the frivolity, the absence of earnestness, the want of devotion to *duty* common to-day, and striving even to creep within the cloister, that we find ourself instinctively placing her noble figure among a grand group of mediæval saints.\*

Mother Elizabeth died in the sixty-second year of her age and the thirty-seventh of her conventional life.—R.I.P.

Letters of sympathy and condolence followed the announcement of her death, especially from those who had known her personally, and therefore prized her great worth. Mother M. Vincent Whitty, of Brisbane, Australia, wrote :

“ I acknowledge with gratitude the account of Mother Elizabeth’s last moments and funeral ; to me it was particularly interesting, I knew her so well. In her loss I feel as if our congregation had lost an earthly pillar, she was so sterling in every way. But, like our beloved foundress, she will do more for us in heaven than if she were left longer on earth. You will feel her loss more and more every day. The great comfort is that she is so much closer to you now than even while she lived, and if she then helped you will she not do much more for you now ? She was interested in every house of the Institute, no matter from what branch it affiliated.

“ Each Sister in our community unites with me in love to all our Limerick Sisters and heartfelt sympathy for your great loss.”

Mother M. di Pazzi Delany, the only one of the *First Seven* who never left Baggot Street, wrote :

\* The veneration which the Limerick people had for Mother Elizabeth, and the pardonable pride which they took in having so fine a character among them, were extraordinary. In the latter years of her life especially, whenever they understood that she wanted to open any institution, they would form themselves into committees and supply her with the means necessary to work out her great ideas. When it was understood that she thought of building a convent chapel at a cost of two thousand pounds, twenty gentlemen presented her with one hundred pounds each, so that she could build it immediately.

“ST. CATHERINE’S, BAGGOT ST., Jan. 24, 1868.

“MY DEAR MOTHER M. CLARE: Mother Elizabeth is, through the mercy of God, released before me and called to enjoy her well-merited reward. In prayer for her I thank our merciful Saviour that her last hours were so soothing to herself and all around her. . . . Thanks be to our sweet Saviour, she labored much to promote His glory and benefit our Institute in the salvation of souls. . . . Begging a share in your prayers, that my last hours may be like unto hers, . . . in union with dear reverend mother and each dear member, I am affectionately yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,

“SISTER M. MAGDALEN DI PAZZI.”

The next is from the mother-superior of the Convent of Mercy, Athlone :

“I cannot tell you how deeply and sincerely grateful I am to you for the truly beautiful account of the solemn closing scene of our beloved mother’s life, or how sensibly I feel reverend mother’s kindness in letting you devote so much of your precious time to the task. We treasure every word that fell from her sanctified lips, and will, please God, spread the good odor. It was a solid end to a saintly life, and must fill all who were privileged to assist at it or hear of it with holy emulation for the reward so richly bestowed in the hour of need on our saintly mother’s long-tried virtues.

“Her treasured blessing is now all that remains to us of one upon whom we could all lean for support and encouragement in the holy path of duty. Her motherly heart will feel a pitying interest in our poor struggles and send us help from Sion.”

From the Convent of Mercy, Roscommon :

“Our hearts, dear mother, are nearly as full of sorrow as your own. I cannot tell you how we feel the loss of our venerated mother. She was almost my first thought yesterday. I felt she would be taken, and, though the prayers were said in choir as usual since we heard of her illness, I could not help feeling last night that *she was praying for us*. What can I say, dearest reverend mother? You have the

truest consolation. All that we can do we will do. To-morrow the Holy Sacrifice will be offered for the repose of our beloved departed, and I hope to procure many besides. We will have the Office and general communions as for our own beloved reverend mother ; she [Mother Elizabeth] shall have a share in all our prayers for her [Mother M. Vincent Hartnett, recently deceased]. I trust that you, dearest reverend mother, and each dear mother and Sister, with the remembrance of her holy life and saintly death to sustain you, will be comforted, and strengthened, and sanctified. With all the affectionate sympathy, etc , etc.”

From the Convent of Mercy, Westport :

“ How can I express my sympathy in the heavy cross it has pleased our Lord to send you all by taking to Himself your beloved mother ? As soon as we got the circular we all assembled to say the Office for her dear soul ; since then we have offered Mass and Holy Communion twice for her soul, and will do so again to-morrow, please God.

“ I feel this is the least we could do for one who was always so kind to us in particular, and who has done so much for the whole Order and for religion in general. It was so good of you to get her blessing for us ; I prize it highly, for I think she was a great saint. You will all miss her greatly, and must be in a sad state on losing such a mother ; but what a blessed exchange for her ! What a bright crown awaited her after such a long, holy, useful career—bringing so many souls to God and doing so much for His greater glory ! . . . ”

From the Convent of Mercy, Mallow :

“ You will agree with me, dear mother, that silence is sometimes more expressive than words, and such is the feeling that prevented me from writing since the afflicting event of our most loved mother’s departure to a better world.

“ The account of her happy, peaceful death was most consoling, and the general sympathy exhibited, as well as the regret expressed by all who knew or even heard of her, could not fail to be gratifying. Our good bishop, in reply to a note in which I asked his prayers, spoke so nice-

ly and so *loudly* about her! He offered the Holy Sacrifice for her.

“I can scarcely realize that she is gone. I was with you in spirit, dear reverend mother, during the days of your deep sorrow, and prayed much that the Comforter of hearts, who alone can support and solace, would sustain you under the heavy cross. May our last end be like unto hers !”

From the Convent of Mercy, Ennis :

“You cannot think how shocked I felt when I received this morning the note of our more than loved mother’s death. I cannot yet believe she is gone. I had hoped against hope that she would rally, and now, of course, I feel it the more deeply.

“You have a painful struggle to bear courageously the weight of the personal cross with the responsibility of your office. I did not feel for you at all while our loved mother was with you, but now you largely share my sympathy, and I must pray more for you than ever.

“May I ask for a more detailed account of her who is gone before us; everything, however minute, will be prized. I am sure she will be another advocate for us in heaven, and we must only animate ourselves to work more untiringly and more purely than ever to increase her happiness by securing our own salvation.”

The following is an extract of a letter from the Convent of Mercy, Tipperary, where Mother Elizabeth spent a couple of weeks in the last month of her life :

“With heartfelt gratitude I thank you on the part of reverend mother and all the Sisters for your long and beautiful account of the last days of our loved Mother Elizabeth. We will keep it for ever. Would you not like to know everything about our mother during the last few days we were so happy and favored as to have her amongst us? What a comfort it was to us! What a blessing to the house! We can never be grateful enough to our good God for this favor. That visit will never be forgotten, but we feel sad sometimes lest the journey may have been too much and may have hastened the last sad scene.

“For some days after coming our departed mother

seemed to think she was growing better, and you would be surprised to see her at recreation : she told so many stories about Baggot Street and St. Mary's, and had small plays nearly every evening, which she seemed to enjoy almost as much as the youngest Sister ; and one evening she sang an amusing song for us, though during the days she used to be so ill. She was greatly pleased to receive letters from St. Mary's, and asked me to answer them. I never saw anything like the gratitude she appeared to feel for every little kindness. On Christmas eve she finished her thousand Hail Marys with our reverend mother, who scarcely left her for a moment while she was here. She went through all the exercises of the retreat.

“ Every Sister here has something to remember that our loved mother said to her.”

### *The Spirit of Mother Elizabeth.*

Mother Elizabeth wished the Sisters always to remember the nature of the religious life, saying that it was a life of penance, and that if they did not find it so it must proceed from either of two causes—viz , that they were so advanced as to have received that ease or facility which is the reward of long tried virtue, or that they had not an interior spirit ; for if influenced by this spirit in all their actions they should feel restraint. She herself never forgot that “ the Institute is founded on Calvary,” and therefore she exercised the virtues of the Crucified in an eminent degree.

POVERTY.—Her spirit of poverty was discernible in many ways—the scraps of paper on which she wrote, the pencil so small that it could scarcely be held, her underclothing so poor and patched that she did not wish even the Sisters to see it, etc. She insisted on their practising poverty very strictly, but without exterior show. She never had more than one habit or veil, etc.

CHASTITY.—Mother Elizabeth inculcated great purity of heart, saying that deliberate venial sin should be unheard of among the Sisters ; that they should always so guard the senses and passions as never to speak without

knowing what they were going to say and why they were going to say it. Guarded in her words, nothing discrediting ever escaped her, and she observed the rules of religious modesty so exactly that every movement was under discipline. In passing through the convent her steps, her opening and closing of doors were unheard, thus teaching by example what she often repeated, "that a religious should be seen before she is heard."

**OBEDIENCE.**—Mother Elizabeth wished the Sisters to be most exact as to obedience, and to be guided by the spirit rather than the letter of a command, asking themselves, in doubtful points, what they thought would be the wishes of the superior, and acting accordingly; that they were to try to have the merit of obedience for every act of the day. Her own spirit of dependence was admirable. After resigning the superiorship this holy religious would not act from herself on the most trifling occasion, nor give a Sister the smallest permission outside of her office without reference to the superior. She often said that nothing pained her more than, when she had merely given a suggestion to a Sister, to have it afterwards said that "Mother Elizabeth desired so and so to be done."

**INTERIOR SPIRIT.**—Mother Elizabeth wished the Sisters to be truly interior and solidly pious, attaching great importance to the spirit of prayer, which she often recommended the Sisters to cultivate assiduously. She used to say that she thought little of Sisters spending a long time in the chapel, if their acts during the day were not in accordance with their professions of devotion. Her advice was: Keep to your centre; give yourself unreservedly to God, and refuse Him no sacrifice.

**SINGLENESS OF PURPOSE.**—Mother Elizabeth considered God alone in all things, and all things in God. Every act of hers was directed solely to His good pleasure and was totally divested of human respect. Had she been less noble-minded and less upright in her intentions she might

have gained more universal applause. Ordinary minds did not always understand or fully appreciate her greatness of soul.

**CONFORMITY.**—Mother Elizabeth evinced the greatest equanimity under trials, proving her submission and edifying the community by her cheerfulness. If she saw any one looking sad after the burial of a Sister she would say that was not the way to receive a cross sent only in love.

**HUMILITY.**—Mother Elizabeth was sincerely humble and showed no consciousness of her talents. When she engaged a Sister to copy anything she had written she begged her to point out any defects in style, etc. Once she apologized to a novice for her hasty manner towards her, which the Sister, though very sensitive, had not perceived. Her manner of writing was clear and methodical. It was a pleasure to read her letters, especially those of direction, or anything she made a rough draft of to have written out more at length.

**RECREATION.**—Mother Elizabeth wished the Sisters to be very gay at recreation, and sought to make each conduce to the happiness of all. To have recreation as general as possible she frequently got up little plays in which all could join. She had a great dread of the Sisters making remarks to each other that they would not make publicly, saying that such things tended to undermine the foundation of community life.

**SECULAR INTERCOURSE.**—Mother Elizabeth labored strenuously to establish and maintain the religious spirit and keep the world and its maxims outside the convent walls. She wished the visits of世俗s to be restricted to the time allowed, that the Sisters, while most cordial, should never lose sight of the exalted obligations of their sublime state. Her views and practice on this point were most reasonable, for if business or gratitude, or any other necessity, made special claims on the Sisters she would freely allow them as much time as the nature of the case

seemed to require. But in no case were they allowed to exceed the prescribed quarter of an hour without special leave. Sweetness, simplicity, and good breeding should mark their intercourse with their friends, and on no occasion would she permit them to lay aside the manners and bearing of gentlewomen. She was particular about the style and handwriting of their letters, nor would she allow them to write anything that would not bear the closest inspection.

**RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.**—Mother Elizabeth desired the Sisters to cultivate a clear, intelligible style of giving instruction, and above all things to impress on the minds of children a great horror of sin, saying that it was for many reasons particularly incumbent on religious to instil this horror into all whom they educated.

**PRIMITIVE CUSTOMS.**—Our mother evinced great anxiety to have all the ancient customs strictly adhered to, scrupulously guarding against the least innovation, even in the smallest things.

**ESTABLISHING NEW HOUSES.**—While possessing a zeal for religion and for souls that never flagged, Mother Elizabeth wisely relinquished what she could not well accomplish without taking from the central house those who constituted much of its strength and teaching staff. To raise new edifices on solid principles was her chief concern, so that proportionate strength could be found where lay the greatest weight. She was inflexible that nothing might impede the Sisters' usefulness in behalf of the poor, for whom they had been almost miraculously raised up by their Father in heaven. At the establishing of new houses she continued with the Sisters for about a month, or until all things were going on promisingly. During her absence she wrote to St. Mary's an account of the journey, patrons, progress of the work, etc., and, in imitation of Mother McAuley she often adopted rhyme in which to convey her graphic and amusing descriptions. These letters were

carefully stored up to descend to future generations of the congregation ; but unfortunately she accidentally discovered them and immediately committed them to the flames, not wishing further importance to be attached to them than the passing pleasure of a first reading. On such occasions she usually acknowledged the Sisters' letters to her by a few lines. Like Mother McAuley, she would not tolerate bad penmanship, no matter how good the composition. To a Sister who wrote a very bad hand, but was taking great pains to improve, and had, in fact, accomplished the feat of a neatly written letter to her absent mother, she said :

“Should your spiritual progress keep pace with your writing,  
Your canonization may yet be inditing.”

The famine year 1846-1847, with the consequent fever and other diseases, brought an amount of labor and anxious care which cannot now be fully realized ; yet humane and generous hearts gave freely for Christ's poor, at home and abroad, and among others Right Rev. Dr. Briggs, Bishop of Beverly, sent large sums to the Limerick Sisters for distribution. At this epoch the proselytizers were abroad, like wolves in sheep's clothing, and, having money in abundance, tried to tempt parents to give up their starving little ones for a mess of pottage. The bait was sometimes successful : unprincipled but remorseful parents “put in the creatures while the times were so hard entirely,” and it was only when they claimed them on the return of better times that they learned how much had been done to destroy in them the germs of the true faith, which, after all, they prized above all earthly treasures.

Though Mother Elizabeth's mind was cast in that serious mould in which exalted virtues flourish, yet she was very simple and loved to surprise us and play little tricks. One day she called at the asylum for two Sisters, and told them to leave word with the presiding Sister that they were

going to St. Mary's, to return next day. The party then drove to the railway station, and on one of them expressing surprise our good mother said : "Sisters, we shall sleep in Cork to-night : there are more St. Mary's than one. How surprised all will be at home ! Not one is in my secret. Only one thing has gone wrong with me : I have lost the pin of my veil which I had for the last twenty years." On arriving at Cork the Sisters dropped their mother at the convent and, driving to the Mercy Hospital, made themselves conversant with its details, which they imparted to her, so that Mother Josephine Warde, when speaking to her about the hospital, was astonished to find how perfectly she understood its regulations. The Sisters got home the same evening, but their companions thought they had been at St. Mary's at the opposite end of the city, till they related their little adventure to the great amusement of all.

Mother Elizabeth had great discernment in discovering the weak points of each one's character, and much skill in strengthening them ; but should her words strike too deeply none knew better than she how to heal the wound most tenderly, and induce her spiritual patient to accept the pain willingly for the sake of its salutary effects. "Once she said to me when a novice," writes a sister, "'Sister, your manner of walking into the choir is like that of one about to say : "Will you dance with me ?'" Feeling somewhat disconcerted at this, I resolved not to give occasion for a similar reproof, and, fixing on one Sister whose style of walking seemed to me very grave, I determined to select her as my model, and, quite to my own satisfaction, I succeeded in imitating her. But my self-complacency was somewhat discomposed when reverend mother called me and said : 'Dear Sister, you have now gone into the opposite extreme. As plainly as acts can speak your walk now says : "Should I not make a very fine reverend mother ?'" After this I concluded it was best to regulate the interior, in the hope that the exterior would then regulate itself."

Once Mother Elizabeth travelled to a branch house with a postulant who thought herself fairly well advanced in spirituality, and, poor child ! one of her affectations was a horror of going near世俗, many of whom, nevertheless, may be nearer to the kingdom of God than some of the self-righteous of a higher calling. "Be prepared to hear Mass in the public church, my dear," said the mother ; "there is no chaplain attached to this convent." "O my dear reverend mother !" exclaimed the postulant in a tone of alarm, "will any世俗 be there ?" "Not one, my dear, in the Sisters' pew, but yourself," was the crushing rejoinder—an unexpected announcement to a person who thought she had been a pious religious for several months.

"Our dear mother's directions," writes one of her children, "were always few, simple, and clear, but most comprehensive. I heard a learned priest say that, twenty years before, he had often disapproved and laughed at her views, but he now knew she saw twenty years beyond her time, and acted intuitively on principles which he required the experience of twenty years to learn.

"If Mother Elizabeth ever perceived she was faulty she never hesitated to acknowledge herself so. On one occasion I was walking in the garden with my mother, who, on seeing her at a distance, went to her and asked leave to prolong her visit. Afterwards she said to me : 'Dear sister, it would be more in accordance with the religious spirit to ask yourself any permission you require than to employ externs to do so.' Perceiving, I suppose, that I looked hurt, she called me after night prayers and said : 'I fear I wronged you to-day.' As she desired me to say if she did, I acknowledged this to be the case, and that I had felt greatly hurt at her supposition. 'Forgive me, my heart,' she said humbly and affectionately, 'but believe, at the same time, that my sole motive was my perhaps over-anxiety for your greater perfection.'"

Mother Elizabeth did not encourage a love for a variety

of spiritual books. Once seeing a Sister bring what she considered too many books when removing from one house to another, she asked the name of a large one, and when told it was a treatise on the Sacred Heart she said : "Give your heart to God, my child, but don't be a book-worm."

Mother Elizabeth was very slow to change anything, and fully believed in the wisdom of the maxim : Good has no greater enemy than better. She was once heard to say that she had never sought to undertake any good work, nor did she ever refuse any proposed to her, solely on the score of difficulty, when once convinced that it would contribute to God's glory. Neither would she for a present good consent to anything that might, under a change of circumstances, prove a dangerous precedent, being well aware of the tendency of the human heart to widen the circle which circumscribes its liberty. She inculcated by word and example persevering fidelity in the discharge of the present duty, which is shown by obedience to be the will of God for us.

The dear Sisters of the Limerick community are never weary of enlarging on the fine traits and solid sanctity of the beloved old mother, who wished to see them zealous, sweet, and joyous, but above all *religious* in all their ways. To this day the phrase, "Mother Elizabeth thought so and so, said so and so," is constantly repeated, and when anything out of the ordinary experience comes up to be decided the first question proposed is, What would Mother Elizabeth have done in such a case? and the view most likely to be hers is unanimously adopted, so that she may be said to govern her beloved children still.

A local journal fittingly remarked in an obituary of Mother Elizabeth : "The pen that aptly illustrates the grandeur and brightness of Mother Elizabeth's soul must, indeed, be 'plucked from the seraph's wing' as well as filled with seraph's melody. Peace be to her! Though why should we pray? The gentleness that never wounded, the

firmness that never relaxed when duty commanded resolution, the subdued ardor that ever invigorated without exciting, the grand hope that was never confounded, the charity that embraced every evil and individual, the thoughtful providence that in all the magnitude and multiplicity of labors and projects comprehended all things and never failed in anything, the noble majesty of dear reverend mother's soul, are lost, in the human aspect of the fact—lost to Limerick for ever. Yet her thoughts live—live for us, and live for ever. They are in the Orphanage, the Houses of Refuge, the convents, the schools, which she has left us; and they are in the devoted communities who, sharing her love, shared her virtues and her devotedness to poor humanity. Her thoughts cannot die, and Mother Elizabeth lives in them. And she shall be like a tree which is planted by the flowing waters, that giveth its fruit in due season, and whose leaves shall not fall away."

And now we take leave of this noble woman, more revered and beloved to-day than on that sad 19th of January, 1868, when she fell asleep on the bosom of her Heavenly Spouse. Happy for her children if they have imbibed her spirit! Often in the gloaming do they hover around the spot, under the shadow of the old Dominican ruin, where her loved remains await a glorious resurrection, and breathe a *requiem* for that sweet soul which they feel is now *at rest*. And even in that hallowed ground never reposed a nobler or a kinder heart than hers.—R.I.P

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE NAAS FOUNDATION.

The Naas Foundation—The Year '38—Situation of Naas—Father Gerald Doyle—He wishes to build a Convent—The Regimental School—Prose-lytism—Constitutional Remedies—Letters of Dr. Doyle—Naas some-what sensational—Educational Statistics of Bishop Doyle's Diocese—His amazing Energy—Will not allow his Priests to incur Debt—Father Doyle applies for Sisters—The Carlow Community, 1839.

THE ninth convent of Our Lady of Mercy was founded in the ancient city of Naas, once the seat of the kings of Leinster, now the county town of Kildare, and, ecclesiastically, in the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. The convents of Naas (1839) and Wexford (1840) are the only houses of the Institute founded during the lifetime of the foundress which were not established by herself in person. The year 1838 was, as has been shown, a busy year with her: Booterstown and Limerick were added to her list during its course, and arrangements were made for Naas and London, in which places convents were established in 1839. As the history of the London house belongs more properly to the annals of the Institute in England, it will open our second volume, entitled *England, Scotland, and the Colonies*.

Naas is a stirring little town near the Liffey, in the great plain of Kildare. From its situation directly on the Grand Canal, which Mother McAuley so often traversed, and from its patriot-pastor, Rev. Gerald Doyle, it was well known to her before it offered a home within its ancient walls to her children.

Although no convent was founded at Naas till 1839, yet such an institution had been in contemplation a dozen years before. Father Gerald, who was ordained in 1804, and appointed parish priest of Naas in 1814, was a bold man to think of opening a convent in his bigoted little parish, in and around which dwelt some three hundred Protestants, and this, too, before the Emancipation ; but in many things the patriot-pastor was in advance of his time. A military barracks, and a regimental school in connection with the same, in which the pupils were mostly Catholics and the teachers invariably non-Catholics—proselytism on all sides, but especially in the jail—kept Father Gerald and his spirited curates, named successively Cummins, Lalor, and Hume, in constant turmoil. The great Dr. Doyle, who was considerably annoyed at this state of things, but hoped to remedy such difficulties by constitutional means, wrote to his namesake November 13, 1824 :

“If the inspector hereafter molest you in the discharge of your duty, or continue to tempt prisoners to renounce their religion, . . . obtain affidavits of such conduct, and I shall not fail, with God’s help, to procure redress for you.”

The ever-vigilant bishop, whose eagle eye penetrated the remotest corner of his diocese, had already desired Father Doyle to write most respectfully to the commander-in-chief for redress regarding the abuses prevailing in the regimental school, and, in case none could be obtained of the local authorities, his lordship threatened to lay the whole affair before Parliament. He gives the population of the parish of Naas, 3,964 Catholics and 347 non-Catholics. The boys of the regimental school were compelled to march to the Protestant church every Sunday, and remain there till the end of the Church-of-England service. They had also the equally undesirable privilege of being compelled to listen to their teachers reading tracts and expounding heretical doctrine. For these poor children were made to choose between remaining uneducated or accept-

ing, externally at least, the theology of their Protestant masters.

There was noise, too, in and about Naas of tithes and Whiteboys, and, for so small a town, a good deal of the sensational hung about it. Even in the old mail-coach days it was an important stopping-place between Dublin and Carlow, and its consequence in nowise diminished when its classic ground came to be intersected by the Grand Canal. As Father Gerald and his curates were among Mother McAuley's most enthusiastic friends, it is hardly necessary to say how deeply she sympathized in their troubles with the local magnates, civil and military.

In a letter to Mr. Stanley,\* afterwards Earl of Derby, Dr. Doyle informs him that sixty-five good school-houses had been built or enlarged in his diocese, and that in these, and in some instances in the chapels, 27,268 Catholic children received a Catholic education. This does not include children of the upper classes whose parents were able to pay for them at the higher colleges and academies, as Clongowes, in the same diocese. Considering the state of Ireland fifty years ago, this number is enormous, and suggests an amount of episcopal and priestly zeal and private benevolence in the small diocese of "J. K. L." probably never surpassed in any section of the Church.

As is always the case in towns which boast extensive barracks, the girls were in some sense worse off than the boys ; and it may well be believed that Mother McAuley's zeal was increased by a closer view of their condition in a place which afforded so few safeguards for their virtue amid the dreadful temptations to which it was constantly exposed. It has already been intimated that the presence of Mother McAuley in any town was a sort of prophecy that her children would yet establish themselves within its gates. Naas formed no exception, and in no other place was their presence more eagerly desired or so sadly needed. The church,

\* See *Life of Dr. Doyle.* Fitzpatrick.

a grand one for the time, was a fine monument of Father Gerald's zeal, erected before the Emancipation ; and shortly after that event, November 29, 1829, we find Dr. Doyle writing to him :

" You have already effected such wonders in the building line that I am not surprised at your contemplating the erection of a convent. But, my dear friend, is it not better to wait until the present debt is paid off and the interior of the chapel fitted up in some decent manner ? "

Father Gerald submitted to the better judgment of his illustrious bishop, and the convent was not seriously spoken of again for some years. In 1838, however, the zealous pastor vowed he would wait no longer, and applied to the bishop, Dr. Haly, for leave to introduce a colony of the Sisters of Mercy. The bishop referred him to the holy foundress and to Mother Frances in Carlow, and it was arranged that the Naas foundation should be undertaken early in the following year from Carlow. Mother McAuley was particularly delighted at the prospect of sending Sisters to Naas, and in February, 1839, she wrote to the superioress at St. Leo's :

" I cannot describe the joy your letter [relative to Naas] affords me. I fear I am in danger of getting a little jealous. Poor Baggot Street is outdone. If you make a foundation already I may retire from business, and certainly without having made a fortune. Dr. Fitzgerald is delighted. . . . In separating with the Sisters for Naas you have a trial to go through. Remember the venerated Dr. Nolan's words : ' It is my lot.' To reflect that it is the lot or portion God has marked out for us will be sufficient to cheer us in every emergency, and that in the faithful performance of every part of our ' lot ' our sanctification consists. There is reason to believe you have been an obedient child, since to the obedient victory is given. May God continue His blessings to you and render you every day more deserving of them ! "

But the Naas convent was not founded till September, 1839. During a visit of five days to Carlow with the Sisters destined for the Bermondsey house Mother McAuley completed the arrangements for the new foundation, and she spent so much time conferring with the professed Sisters regarding it that the novices were not too well pleased at being deprived of so much of her delightful society.

Although she could not promise to be present at the opening of the Naas branch, Mother McAuley was deeply interested in this first offshoot from a provincial convent.

The Carlow community then consisted of eighteen members, six of whom were professed. Mother Frances Warde and her companions from Baggot Street, Sister M. Josephine Trenor, Sister M. de Sales Meagher and Sister M. Teresa Kelly (one of God's heroines), Sister M. Catherine Meagher and Sister M. Agnes Greene, were the seniors; Sisters M. Cecilia Maher and Angela Johnson were in remote retreat for profession; Sisters M. Paula Cullen, M. Vincent Kenny, and M. Rose Strange\* were novices; while the postulants were Sisters Teresa and Catherine Maher,

\* Three Sisters of this name entered at St. Leo's, two of whom came to Pittsburgh in 1843. It is to a request of Mother Rose Strange (who founded the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Cheadle, England, and died in Carlow, 1873) that we owe Cardinal Wiseman's beautiful little drama, "The Witch of Rosenberg," which was forwarded to Carlow endorsed:

"This is the first and only manuscript of the drama written by the author, and forwarded to St. Leo's Convent with his blessing and a request for prayers.

"N. C. W."

The following letter explains itself:

"8 YORK PLACE, PORTMAN SQUARE, LONDON, W., December 12, 1864.

"**MY DEAR COUSIN AND DAUGHTER IN CHRIST:** It has pleased God to afflict me again with illness, and I write from my bed.

"Many thanks for your kind letter on St. Nicholas's day. Soon after this letter you will receive a small box, addressed to the reverend mother, from me. It is intended for the community, and contains a little Christmas present of things from the Tyrol, not, indeed, of much value.

"But my special desire is that it be opened at recreation in presence of all the community, and you will let me know if they like it.

"Prayers, if you please: to-day is the anniversary of your foundation.

"Your affectionate father in Christ,

"N. CARD. WISEMAN.

"**To Mother M. ROSE STRANGE, Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Carlow."**

Bessie O'Brien, Julia Redmond, Ellen Cullen, and Joanna Kinsella. There was a sweet young lay Sister, Veronica McDarby, who died in Pittsburgh February 26, 1881, having spent her whole religious life as portress, in which troublesome and fatiguing office she was admired by all, gentle and simple, for her sweetness and prudence. She retained charming recollections of the holy foundress, and said to the writer, among other things, shortly before her death: "I used to be the first to see our saintly mother, as it was I who opened the door for her; and what a motherly embrace and a tender 'God bless you, my heart!' she always had for me!"

About this time Mother McAuley, when asked for foundations, was obliged to refuse many because she could not find or spare suitable superiors. "Hands and feet are plentiful enough," she wrote, "but the *heads* are nearly all gone." As she had sent from St. Mary's every *head* she could spare, she remarked at St. Leo's, to which she was always most partial: "There are hands and feet in Baggot Street, but *heads* in Carlow"—a phrase that showed her profound penetration of character and perception of ability, for almost every Sister we have named was destined to spend her life in offices of authority. The foundresses of the Institute in the United States, in New Zealand, in Naas, Wexford, Athy, Westport, Cheadle, etc., were among the group to whom she playfully addressed the observation.

For the Naas foundation Sister M. Josephine Trenor, Sister M. Catherine Meagher, and Sister M. Agnes Greene were selected. Mother Frances and another Sister, with the usual ecclesiastical dignitaries, accompanied them and remained until the first difficulties were happily overcome. The new convent was opened on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1839, and called St. Mary's. From the position of Naas, about twenty miles from Dublin, and on one of the most frequented lines of travel southward—nearly half way between Dublin, the first home of the mis-

sioners, and Carlow, the second—they expected to have the holy foundress frequently among them, and hence do not seem to have experienced the intense loneliness or homesickness which at first oppressed their more distant Sisters in Cork and Charleville. It was with unfeigned satisfaction that Mother McAuley at last saw her daughters in a town which had so long desired and so greatly needed their ministrations. In 1840 she paid them a special visit, examined into their progress, advised and assisted them—for, like Charleville, Naas had obstacles of every species to overcome ; and on one occasion, at least, Mother McAuley was obliged to correct with a severity quite exceptional with her. “Poor Naas,” she wrote, “is like the little chicken called *creepy-crawly* in a healthy clutch. It has been a little martyrdom to my poor Sister M. Josephine—so much to be done and so few to do it. I wish it would take a start.” Like all foundations destined to succeed, it was necessary that the clay about the roots should be well shaken ; hence one is not surprised to learn that crosses rained upon it thick and fast from within and without. For a while it gave the holy foundress much anxiety, but finally repaid her zeal and prayers for its progress by realizing her most sanguine expectations. Before the close of the first year its pupils numbered several hundreds and its Young Ladies’ School had opened with eighteen scholars. That the Naas community has been singularly healthy in the mild atmosphere once breathed by the stalwart kings of Leinster may be gathered from the fact that its necrology contains but five names in a period extending over forty years.

Mother McAuley kept up a pleasant correspondence with her children at Naas. Her letters to this ancient royal city, like everything else she wrote, reveal, in some way or other, her beautiful spirit. While she was busy preparing for the Galway foundation in May, 1840, with “so much to press upon my mind in every direction that I became quite

weary," her "old child, Sister M. Josephine," then presiding at Naas, sent her a present of turkey-eggs. Not content with thanking the donor, weeks after the foundress mentions the circumstance to the mother-superior at St. Leo's, a mutual friend : "Sister M. Josephine sent me some turkey-eggs with a note saying, 'I send you some of your favorite eggs.' I do not remember ever speaking about them, but of course I did, and it was so very kind of her to keep it in remembrance that I wrote a few lines to thank her, but so badly that it was distressing to me to forward them."

This is another instance of reverend mother's beautiful urbanity towards her spiritual children. She never accepts the least favor without grateful acknowledgments ; and as all loved her so dearly as to take to themselves every kindness done to her or her Institute, she is careful to make them sharers in her gratitude and gratification whenever the most trifling benefit is conferred upon her.

A little before this she had administered a reproof to an "old child" of hers, which those religious who allow the affairs of their friends in the world to take up too much room in their hearts will find salutary. We give an extract from the letter that conveyed this rather unusual proof of her esteem :

"I am much distressed, dear Sister, to hear you say : 'I wrote to you, but just at that time I got the painful intelligence of my sister, which absorbed all my thoughts.' I hope not *all* [your thoughts], my very dear child. That would be a very bad way to make religious houses flourish or advance the work of God."

Though the holy mother felt it her duty to reprove a member who allowed *all* her thoughts to be absorbed by anything less than God, she was not, therefore, without deep sympathy for her bereaved child ; and writing to Limerick, she says : "I feel very much for my poor J—, she was so fondly attached to her sister."

Fathers Gerald Doyle and George Hume, who were pastors at Naas on the arrival of the Sisters, continued to evince deep interest in the progress of the establishment. Mother McAuley frequently mentions them in her letters. When either happened to be in Dublin he was accustomed to call at St. Mary's and give her an account of her dear children. Once when a young lady entered Baggot Street whom the Naas Sisters were anxious to receive, Mother McAuley, on learning how matters stood, told her she might go to them if she pleased, and, on giving an account of the affair, wrote this beautiful sentiment: "The prosperity of St. Mary's, Baggot Street, must never be built on the disappointment of another house."

When Mother McAuley was about to journey homeward from Birr, her last foundation in Ireland, she thought of the dear friend who had so kindly remembered her long-forgotten fancy for turkey-eggs, and in a letter to Carlow, February 14, 1841, she says: "Sister M. Josephine begs that I will take Naas in my way home, in which I have promised to gratify her."

It is almost superfluous to say that the Sisters of Mercy were but as the dawning of a second spring in Naas, for that once regal town, like all the ancient places in Ireland, was formerly remarkable for the number and richness of its religious houses. But the patrimony of the Church and the poor had long since been diverted into other channels. The Luttrells in the days of Henry VIII., and the Aylmers in those of Elizabeth, were dowered with the fairest monastic spoils of royal Naas.

The Naas Sisters have been engaged from the beginning in teaching children, the poor and the rich, instructing adults, visiting the prisons, etc. In 1876 they took charge of the government Workhouse Hospital at Naas, and more recently that of Celbridge, about nine miles distant. The number of Sisters residing at the Naas convent at present (1881) is twenty-three. The convent, dedicated to Our

Lady of Mercy, is built in the Gothic ecclesiastical style, in a most ornate and elaborate manner, and is a great ornament to the town.

This convent has been very prosperous. When it had been in operation about eleven years, during which it was rarely without a proselyte at the gate, Right Rev. Andrew Byrne, first bishop of Little Rock, Arkansas, came to Ireland in search of a religious community willing to send a filiation to his distant see. He examined the Rules of various Institutes, and, having selected the Sisters of Mercy as best fitted to aid him in the Catholic education of children and instruction of adults, he applied to Naas for a colony. Four professed members and six postulants volunteered to accompany him. The party left Naas early in November, 1850, sailed from Dublin on the feast of the bishop's patron, November 30, and reached New Orleans January 23, 1851, after a perilous voyage of seven weeks. They were received with great kindness by the Ursuline nuns, with whom they remained some days, and they reached their wild home February 5. But as the story of their labors in this new region belongs to the annals of the Institute in America, it suffices here to point out Naas as one of the very few Irish houses which has sent colonies direct to America.

Mother McAuley continued to the last to take a lively interest in the progress of Naas, and her letters and visits were of immense service in forming the little community. They supplied to her younger children the experience they could not otherwise have obtained. It may be said that she exercised the surveillance of a mother-general over the convents founded during her lifetime. The assistance given in this way was the greatest blessing and comfort to the young superiors whom she continued to train for their important office, guiding by the pen those whom she could not see face to face, as often as she and they desired.

In every emergency the Sisters in all quarters looked up

to their great mother ; she it was whom they expected to solve doubts, to remove obstacles, to unravel knotty questions, to raise their drooping spirits when effort seemed hopeless, to enlighten their minds, to receive their confidences. In every *dark place* of their pilgrimage they expected her to appear as a *shining light* to lead them onward. In 1839 her children exceeded one hundred, and there were twenty-nine postulants and novices in the Baggot Street novitiate. Every member of the Order was personally known to her ; the absent corresponded with her not merely on the little details of daily life, but also on delicate and intricate matters. She kept each house duly informed of everything of importance that transpired in the others, thus creating a mutual interest, a strong family feeling, so to speak, among persons who in some instances had never seen each other. Apart from the divine blessing which so visibly descended on whatever the holy mother undertook, this more than anything else accounts for the marvellous progress of the early houses and the beautiful spirit that pervaded them. For under such guidance wrong, whether in principle or practice, might indeed be able to enter, but could never obtain a foothold. And a mother who had a particular devotion to helping and serving other Orders as opportunity offered would not, surely, deny the faith and become worse than an infidel by neglecting the sheep and lambs of her own household. For, in one sense,

"if our virtues  
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike  
As if we had them not."

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE FOUNDATION IN GALWAY.

Father Daly must execute his Commission—Preparations necessary for a new Foundation—Bishop Walsh wants a Convent in Birmingham—Galway—Bishop Browne—Characteristics—“Pride, Poverty, and Devotion”—The Dove of Elphin—Sisters to visit the Sick—Crosses—Death of Sister M. Frances Marmion—Letters—The Sisters set out for Galway—Pleasant Journey—Escorted by Father O'Hanlon—Loughrea—The Monastery of the Saints—Verses—Rhyming Chronicle—The Strict Observance—Accidents and Incidents—Letter - Painful Reminiscences.

ON Tuesday, January 14, 1840, reverend mother and her companion, Sister Mary Teresa White, returned to Dublin after a stay of two months in London, where the Convent of Bermondsey had been established in the preceding November. An application from the Bishop of Galway, Most Rev. George Joseph Plunket Browne, awaited her, and a parish priest of the town, Very Rev. Peter Daly, arrived soon after to expedite the business. This zealous, energetic clergyman would take no refusal. “He wasn’t sent to inquire whether she had Sisters to spare or not; he was commissioned by his bishop to *get* Sisters, and Sisters he must have.” And armed with recommendations from Archbishop Murray and others, whom the foundress could not well refuse, he would not leave the room until she promised to send a few Sisters to Galway soon after Easter. “When I think rest is coming,” said she, “business seems only to commence.” A foundation at that time involved much preparation in many respects. The Holy Rule had to be copied, and signed by the archbishop, as it was not yet confirmed by the Holy See. All the

instructions for reception and profession, for retreats, etc., which the foundress had compiled and arranged with much labor and solicitude ; the ceremony music—all had to be carefully and legibly copied, for all were necessary to aid the young superiors in their responsible and laborious duties ; but this was the least part of the labor a new foundation involved. And scarcely had the mother-foundress begun her preparations for Galway when Right Rev. Dr. Walsh, Vicar-Apostolic of the Midland District, England, applied to her to ascertain whether she would receive a band of postulants to be trained in the Baggot Street novitiate for the purpose of introducing the Order of Mercy into Birmingham ; also whether she could lend a mother-superior and a few other experienced members to regulate the work of the proposed establishment.

The Institute was now firmly established in Leinster and Munster, and it would be premature to attempt to establish it just yet in Ulster, as Mother McAuley learned when she visited Newry, by invitation of Bishop Blake, in 1839. But no such objection could be urged against Connaught, whose chief city, visited by her in 1826, was to be the seat of her first convent in that picturesque province. Several ladies in Galway were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the holy foundress, as they were preparing, under the direction of the bi-hop, to devote themselves to God and the poor as Sisters of Mercy.

Few cities in Ireland are more famed in song and story than the queen city of the west, situated at the head of Galway Bay. Its Old Town and its New Town, its quadrangular buildings and open courts, its arched gateways and toppling houses, and its calm southern aspect on a warm day were all familiar to reverend mother. The fiery black eyes and rich brown complexions of its street-folks no doubt recalled to her mind the time when the ships of Lisbon and Cadiz thronged its capacious harbor and rarely failed to leave behind a contingent from their swarthy

crews. The ancient, half-Spanish-looking town, boldly facing the Atlantic, had a peculiar charm for the foundress, while the beauteous scenery of Lough Corrib could not fail to entrance her poetic soul. She had a sort of chivalrous regard for the old place, and deprecated the accusation of its enemies, that "pride, poverty, and devotion" were its most salient characteristics, as an arrant slander. Long before she thought of shrouding her graceful figure in the religious habit she had visited Galway, accompanied by her godchild, Teresa Byrne, to assist at the reception of her "dear Fanny Tighe." But even when applications poured in upon her like a tropical rain she never expected the "City of the Tribes" to be represented among them; for it was the best provided of any town of its size with religious orders—no less than six old-established convents to a population of some fifteen or sixteen thousand Catholics.

As the cities of Connaught had been cities of refuge for the rest of Ireland in the days of persecution, the Catholic religion flourished in the west when it seemed extinct in other places. And the hardy westerners—in most instances descendants of the "innocent papists" to whom Cromwell, in his more merciful moods, allowed the privilege of choosing between—the lower regions and Connaught, quietly arrogate to themselves the distinction of owning the best blood in Ireland. There is, in truth, a sort of foundation for the boast. For this compulsory migration westward saved several of the old historic families from utter extinction; and to this day the estates people of Connaught are mostly Catholics, which is not the case in the other provinces.

All this helps to explain the "Galway consequence" which sometimes annoyed, but more often amused, the holy foundress, and for which, with her usual sagacity, she made ample allowance. "Every place," she said, "has its peculiarities, and to these we must concede as much as possible."

Mother McAuley greatly esteemed the bishop, whose meek, suave character so much impressed her friend O'Connell that he used to call him the Dove, and, on his translation to another see, "the Dove of Elphin." Like every other bishop who came in contact with her, Dr. Browne showed her the greatest respect and esteem, and never refused anything she asked. The genuine charity and apostolic spirit of this holy prelate were among her consolations; for when she found bishops, priests, and religious devoted in the highest degree to the interests of their sacred vocation, she would thank God with extraordinary fervor for the graces bestowed on them, and say: "To meet with such saintly people quite renovates me." Among the last letters she wrote is an interesting one addressed to Bishop Browne, of Galway, in reply to a most pressing invitation to give him an opportunity of conferring with her once more by coming to assist at the first profession of her children in his city.

Although Galway was exceptionally well provided with nuns, yet there was ample room for the Sisters of Mercy and great need of them. The sick and destitute, the prisoner, and the almost equally unfortunate inmates of the bleak, sad "poorhouse," invented by Protestantism to keep the poor of Jesus Christ apart from its respectability, could not be aided by the cloistered nuns otherwise than by prayers. The zealous bishop desired to supplement the religious bodies already existing in his diocese by nuns who could visit his people in their affliction and relieve their wants. He saw, and the foundress saw, that it might not be easy to maintain a seventh community, which, as professing to perform the works of mercy, required some share of public support; for, in truth, the vulgar aristocracy of wealth was rarer among "the Tribes" than the aristocracy of birth or intellect. Besides, she had scarcely any members to spare from the "poor old mother-house."

But after much prayer and some consultation it became

evident that God willed her to undertake the work, and she prepared to do so with her usual reliance on His providence. While the preparations were in progress God took to Himself one of her most valued subjects, Sister M. Frances Marmion, one of three Sisters called by their friends "The Three Graces," on account of their personal loveliness, amiability, and accomplishments, who were among her early children. Sister M. Agnes Marmion died in 1836. Her exquisite voice and well-trained fingers caused her to be missed in the music choir, but her virtues continued to edify her companions when her place there was well filled. Like Sister M. Agnes, Sister M. Frances had the consolation of reverend mother's unwearied care and attention, which she greatly needed; for she had a most timorous conscience, and had been afflicted during her short and holy life by an excessive fear of death. This, however, suddenly disappeared when she received the last sacraments, and was succeeded by a perfect peace and confidence which reverend mother described as heaven-sent. She describes the last moments of this sweet young Sister in a letter to Carlow :

"At half-past five this morning we were saying the last prayers for our dear Sister M. Frances. It is now past twelve, and she is yet alive, but has not spoken since six. From that time till now she has not been more uneasy than she often was in unquiet sleep. I think she will speak again. Do you remember how our dear Sister M. Agnes spoke long after we thought she never would? It is a melancholy consolation to look for; yet I think we would all like to hear her gentle voice once more. May God grant us all humble resignation to His adorable will!"

Under a later date she says: "Our beloved and edifying Sister M. Frances did not speak again as I expected—expired without any struggle. This is a season of sorrow with us, thank God!" It was truly a season of sorrow; in March, 1840, St. Joseph called home three of her dearest

and most efficient Sisters.—R.I.P. Whenever a foundation was accepted one member or more died, that it might have, as the Sisters were wont to say, intercessors in heaven.

A letter to Mother M. Vincent Hartnett, Limerick, about this time, refers to the Galway foundation :

“ I never for one moment forgot you or ceased to feel the most sincere interest and affection ; so forgive all my past neglect, and I will atone in due season. A thousand thanks for the really nice articles you contributed to the bazaar. Tell my dear Sisters I did not expect any this time. The Rotunda was engaged all Easter-week ; we are obliged to wait for the 29th or 30th of April. A letter from Birmingham informs us that we are to have five postulants this week or next, accompanied by a clergyman who is to bring plans of a convent to be shown to me. This unavoidably puts me under arrest, though the Monday after Low Sunday was named by Rev. Mr. Daly for Galway. Immediately after the bazaar and the arrival of our new Sisters we will start for Galway, go by Tullamore, and proceed to Limerick with our whole heart. Mother di Pazzi sends her love and is delighted you like the things she bought. A new child enters here on Thursday—our third since the last ceremony ; and if five come from England we shall have a nice lot again, just when I thought we were retiring from business. God bless you, my own child and dear Sister ! Give my fondest love to all, and pray for your affectionate

M. C. McAULEY.”

Early in May, 1840, the foundation set out for Galway, visiting Tullamore and Loughrea *en route*. During this pleasant excursion across the country, at the most delightful season of the year, Very Rev. Father O'Hanlon made arrangements to stop at Loughrea, the Carmelite convent of which is celebrated in the annals of his illustrious Order as the only monastic institution in Ireland whose origin antedates the Reformation, and in which the succession of priors was never interrupted. Father O'Hanlon glowed with enthusiasm while praying in this sacred spot where so

many of his illustrious brethren chose to starve or die in crypts and caverns rather than quit the hallowed ruins of their ancient monastery. In the dark days of persecution their ranks were recruited from Spanish novitiates by Irish members who returned to their native land ready for the palm of martyrdom. The monastery of women, however, is of more recent origin. Mother McAuley and her nuns spent one night with these dear Carmelites ; her children have a fine establishment in Loughrea since 1850.

Loughrea is a very ancient town, of some four thousand inhabitants, about twenty miles east of Galway. It is now the episcopal town of the diocese of Clonfert ; but the town of Clonfert does not contain half as many inhabitants at present as it did monks at one time, when St. Brendan, founder of the see, ruled over more than three thousand monks in the sixth century, every one of whom earned his own support and wherewith to relieve the poor. But "the Monastery of the Saints," as it was called, became a ruin at the Reformation. The Carmelite monastery of Loughrea was founded in 1300 by Richard Burke, Earl of Ulster ; some centuries later it was granted, with other monastic spoils, to the Earl of Clanricarde.

It was delightful to reverend mother to make a pilgrimage through these sacred places, so rich in Christian and historic lore, under the guidance of one so well acquainted with their beauties as Father O'Hanlon. She wrote several descriptions of it for her absent children, and a rhyming chronicle which gave them great pleasure :

" My dearest Sisters, kind and sweet,  
Tho' 'tis not long till we shall meet,  
I'll tell you all  
That may, perhaps, amusement give,  
But nothing that could pain or grieve—  
Oh ! not at all.

" In truth, we have been greatly spared,  
And very well so far have fared—  
Not one cold frown,

Were this to last we'd suffer loss,  
Since independent of the cross  
There is no crown.

“ Stopped at Mount Carmel on the way,  
And passed a most delightful day.  
Dear, simple nuns !  
Had lamb and salad for our dinner—  
Far, far too good for any sinner ;  
At tea hot buns.

“ Got use of the superior's cell,  
And slept all night extremely well  
On my soft pillow.  
When lying down on my nice bed  
I thought how very soon this head  
Must wear the willow.

“ Next morning we had Mass in choir,  
And, to our very heart's desire,  
Our own dear Father.  
Then we had breakfast, warm and neat,  
Both tea and coffee, eggs and meat,  
Whiche'er we'd rather.”

It was known in Dublin that the Galway missionaries were to spend a night at Loughrea with the Carmelite nuns, who are of the primitive observance; and as Mother McAuley was accustomed, when business brought her to other convents, to follow exactly the regulations of whatever convent she sojourned in, the Sisters were, no doubt, alarmed lest she should subject herself to the rigid abstinence of Carmel. But her director, Father O'Hanlon, would allow nothing of the kind; and reverend mother, to remove their anxiety, gives them the sumptuous bill of fare with which the “ dear, simple nuns ” regaled her party. Although the foundress “ got use of the superior's cell,” she takes care to inform them that a nice bed and a soft pillow were provided by the considerate though ascetic hostess. She was at that time in such wretched health that her appearance had shocked her Tullamore children, with whom she had rested the day before. She died the following year.

The rhyming chronicle proceeds to describe their exit :

“ At eight o'clock we started fair,  
 One car and horse, one chaise and pair ;  
 The car went first.  
 Not long we travelled when a wheel,  
 All mounted with ill-tempered steel,  
 Completely burst.”

The foundress goes on to describe the fearless driver, the forge, the blacksmith who couldn't be found, and of whom the watchman, a teetotaler, said “ he drank his bed,” the patching up of the broken wheel, the dashing forward “ in true John Gilpin style,” the arrival at their western home, at which they took a peep before going to the Presentation convent, where they were to spend the first night :

“ We peeped at our fixed habitation,  
 Then drove off to the Presentation,  
 Where all was love.  
 My dear old friend, sweet Fanny Tighe,  
 By every tender means did try  
 Her joy to prove.

“ Next morning our new cares began,  
 Each one proposing her own plan—  
 All different taste.  
 What some approved some deemed bad,  
 But all agreed that now we had  
 No time to waste.

“ The work is now progressing fast,  
 Not one waste hour we yet have passed,  
 And Sisters many :  
 We hear of Chrissy, Jane, and Bess  
 All ready to put on the dress,  
 But yet not any.”

The writer describes the other expected postulants as “ of this poor world weary, though free from care ” :

“ And now with all their minds and hearts  
 Of all its joys give up their parts,  
 The cross to bear.”

She concludes her verses sweetly and rather prettily :

“Farewell, loved Sisters, old and new ;  
With joy shall I return to you  
And count you o'er.  
And if my number full I find  
United in one heart and mind,  
I'll bless my store.”

“We passed one day at the Presentation convent,” wrote Mother McAuley to Cartlow, “with my dear friend Sister Louise Tighe. She is all affection, but changed from a fine young girl of twenty-six to a middle-aged woman of forty. It seemed so short a period since last I saw her that I looked eagerly for my dear Fanny, when to my surprise a new figure with a new face ran forward to meet me. Alas ! how many loved faces have vanished from my poor sight in life and death since.”

Although her reception at the Presentation convent was most enthusiastic, and her “dear Fanny” as affectionate as ever, this visit had a rather depressing effect on the bright, joyous foundress. From 1826 to 1840 were for her eventful years, into which many lives were crowded. She had lived too rapidly ; no constitution, no intellect could have borne the strain much longer. So much was crowded into that short space that she could rarely pause to recall what had preceded it. But Fanny Tighe had spent quiet days with her at Coolock House, had been in society with her beautiful nieces, was acquainted with all whom she had ever known—now passed from earth for ever. “Sweet Fanny” had been the companion of her devotions, and often the medium of her benevolence. Years had dealt rather roughly with one whom Dublin had known as a celebrated belle ; Fanny now looked older than her guest, who was thirteen years her senior. But the first sound of her sweet voice melted the soul of the foundress, so tender and so sensitive, and her maternal heart could not help adverting to the many sweet faces she had parted from in life and death during these eventful fourteen years, so full of glory and affliction to her.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE GALWAY FOUNDATION, CONCLUDED.

Arrival in Galway—Death of Sister Mary Bourke—Letters—The Ursulines follow Bishop Browne to Elphin—The eleventh Hour—Converts—The English Sisters—Letters—Return to Dublin—Second Visit to Galway—Grand Ceremony—Beautiful Letter—Extract of an after-dinner Speech of O'Connell's—A Glance at the Foot—Letter to Bishop Browne—To Sister M. Joseph Joyce—To Mother Teresa White—Conclusion.

MOTHER McAULEY and her companions arrived in Galway on the 8th of May, 1840, and were most cordially welcomed by the bishop, clergy, and people, as well as by the Presentation nuns. She remained about two months, and found more than enough to do besides the regular foundation business, as a most malignant species of typhus broke out in the town, and even entered the convent. One of the first postulants received, Sister Mary Bourke, described by reverend mother as a most amiable person, was attacked. She had but just devoted herself to God and His poor with great fervor ; it pleased Him to accept her good-will and her life instead of her labor. She had the privilege of being nursed by reverend mother day and night, and died June 11, 1840, "most happily, in fervent sentiments of gratitude to God," wrote reverend mother. Miss Bourke, determined that the Institute should lose as little as possible by her death, bequeathed five hundred pounds to the community to admit a portionless member in her place. This dear Sister's death in the beginning of the foundation was a great affliction to the little community, but it pleased God that it should not dampen the ardor of

others who intended to join the Institute. Reverend mother gives many particulars of the Galway establishment in letters to Limerick, Carlow, and Dublin :

“ I was so hurried and so cross,” she writes to Carlow, “ preparing for this foundation, that I was obliged to put off writing to you. Five English Sisters entering ; the bazaar ; my poor little Sister Mary carried down from her bed to be removed to Booterstown ; Sister M. Teresa very ill—so much in every direction to press upon my mind that I became quite weary. . . . If possible I would have written to your poor brother’s widow, but in real truth I was not able. I trust God will protect his family and extend to him that mercy in which He delights. . . . I feel very much for your poor sister-in-law. God will assist such a good mother ; not one of her children will be lost.\*

“ We like the bishop here very much. We have a very large house, not yet in conventional order. Sisters are entering sooner than I expected ; we have now four postulants, one a very nice person somewhat stricken in years—good means and great Galway consequence. Miss Joyce is coming, a sweet little creature about twenty. Her papa and mamma are making a tour, but she could not be induced to go. I scarcely know what I am writing, with the noise of carpenters and painters. You may be sure patronage is greatly divided here ; each house has its party—Presentation, Dominican, Augustinian, Franciscan, Ursulines, etc., and now Sisters of Mercy. The Ursulines are said to enjoy most of episcopal patronage, but Bishop Browne has love and charity enough for thousands, and embraces all with genuine paternal care and apostolic affection.”

The *on dit* seems to have been correct on this occasion. The Galway Ursulines had come from Waterford to Limerick in 1826, but shortly after removed to the beautiful demesne of Dangan, near Galway. On the translation of

\* A prophecy ; not one of the above children or their descendants has lost the faith up to this date, 1881.

Bishop Browne to the see of Elphin they left Galway, and, after a temporary stay in Athlone, settled in Sligo, the episcopal town of the diocese of Elphin, where they have since remained.

Mother McAuley continues :

“ I am now in the kitchen ; the room I was in is being painted. I feel the turf-smoke ! This is a pious Catholic town. There would be fifteen in the convent in six months, if three hundred pounds could be accepted ; but the poor-funds will not admit of this. Three of our candidates have merely enough ; another has forty-seven pounds a year and five hundred to bequeath ; this last has fully arrived at the eleventh hour. Our Order is greatly liked ; but there is really no money [to spare] among the people. A very nice person, daughter to an estate gentleman, is coming, and with all the influence of bishops and priests—and they possess much—more than five hundred pounds cannot be obtained : he would not give six. The generality of respectable inhabitants could not, we are assured, give more.

“ The bishop is all sweetness to every one. Very Rev. Mr. Daly is our guardian. He says he does not see any more who could bring what is absolutely required.

“ Our English Sisters are greatly liked. One, Miss Beckett, a convert of high family, is quite equal to Sister M. Clare in arts, sciences, and languages, etc. It is very animating to see six persons most happily circumstanced leave their friends and country to enter on a mission so contrary to natural inclinations ; but the fire which Christ came to cast upon earth is kindling very fast.

“ We just got a sweet postulant [Christina Joyce], a second Mary Teresa McAuley in look and manner. Her family are going to travel, and, though she would have seen the Pope and all the splendors of the Eternal City, she entreated to be left at home, that she might join us as soon as possible. Our bishop could not be kinder ; and as for Father Daly, we all love him. He is delighted with being

constantly called on, and proud of the new Sisters. He says 'the root has struck,' and he feels that it will flourish."

Mother McAuley remained much longer than usual in Galway, and found it exceedingly difficult to leave. Letters from Dublin, which stated that if she did not return at once she should not find Sister M. Aloysius Scott alive, made her anxious to go, and she was unable to keep her promise to "proceed to Limerick with her whole heart" on leaving Galway. She apologizes as well as she could for this unavoidable breach of her word, or rather for being obliged, from unforeseen circumstances, to defer its accomplishment. The following is dated July 1, 1840:

"MY OWN DEAR SISTER M. ELIZABETH: I have waited to the latest moment to know what I should be obliged to do. To leave this sooner would certainly have been injurious. It was thought we were quite alarmed at the fever, and if we moved it would have been said all was broken up. This was quite evident. The difficulties are over, thank God! Three are received. A very nice postulant has entered, and another is expected this week. Endless letters from Baggot Street with bad accounts of Sister M. Aloysius, though I believe I have not heard all. Rev. Mr. Daly had a letter from Father O'Hanlon which he would not show me, but informed me that I was to return immediately. Our places are engaged for Tuesday. In his letter Father O'Hanlon promises Father Daly that if I am not detained longer—for Rev. Mr. Daly would not suffer me to go—I should return in a few weeks.

"You may be certain Galway will never see me again but from Limerick. I do think it would be well for me to come to Miss Joyce's reception, which will be in September, my own favorite month.\* Our ceremonies in Baggot Street—reception of the English Sisters and profession of three—will be about the 5th or 6th. I should then set off for Limerick direct, and would certainly keep them waiting in Galway as long as Rev. Mr. Daly would have patience.

\* September was Mother McAuley's favorite month, because so many feasts of the Blessed Virgin occur in it: Our Lady of Mercy, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the Holy Name of Mary, the Seven Dolors, etc. The devotions of the month of May were not generally introduced till after her death.

You would like him very much, though he is the greatest master we ever had. I really could not leave this without his full concurrence, except I were to become angry or stiff. All reasoning and entreaty were fruitless. He said : 'You shall not go ; not a vehicle in Galway would carry you. I will not suffer the foundation to be injured.' This makes me fear he has had a melancholy account, as he has so quickly assented. I shall be truly glad of the excuse to return, in order to get to you and my dear Sister M. Vincent.

"Thank God for your wonderful progress ! I comfort myself thinking I shall soon see you all and everything about you will look so beautiful. The only disappointment I fear is that the bishop may be at the sea. I should be very sorry not to see him. You remember he was there [at Kilkee] when we first arrived, September, '38. All unite with me in love to you and Sister M. Vincent. I will write from Dublin Tuesday or Wednesday next. May God for ever bless you, my dear Sister M. Elizabeth ! Absence has much increased my affection for you. Even the new Sisters here are sorry for our mutual disappointment this time, I have talked so much of it. Pray for your fondly attached

"M. C. McAULEY."

The Father Daly to whom Mother McAuley so frequently refers was a very popular priest in Galway in her time ; later he was known throughout the whole country from his connection with the Galway line of steamers sailing direct to America and thereby materially shortening the distance between Ireland and the United States, and the interest he took in that most useful enterprise. "He is most generous," wrote Mother McAuley, "but has not means proportioned to his undertakings, and is always engaged for too much." For twenty years he had charge of the Presentation nuns, who were introduced into Galway in 1815 by Bishop French, "Warden of Galway."

Like all the houses founded by reverend mother, the Galway convent flourished, but only in the shade of the cross. In the course of a few years a large and beautiful convent replaced the quaint old house in which she left her

dear children July, 1840. There are now four branches in the city of Galway—the convent, the Magdalen Asylum, the Asylum for Widows and Orphans, and the Workhouse Hospital, where the Sisters attend hundreds of the poor and afflicted of the lowest class. From Galway convents have been established in Castlebar, Mayo, and Clifden, in the wild district of Connemara. On her return to Dublin Mother McAuley's health was observed to be much impaired ; constant changing of beds and occasional want of accommodation, with the thousand-and-one anxieties of her position as directress of so many houses, began to tell upon her naturally fine constitution. From this date the harassing cough never left her. Towards the end of July, 1840, she wrote to Mother Teresa White, who presided in Galway :

“I know you are anxious to have a more circumstantial account of all that relates to your old habitation. First, then, I have a real old-man's cough night and morning—old woman is entirely exploded from the fashionable vocabulary ; no such character is to be recognized in future. . . . I hope my old-man's cough will not impede my journey in September, to which I look forward with joyful impatience. . . . Five more candidates have presented themselves. . . . A sixth English Sister has arrived. It seems so extraordinary to find no vacant seat in the refectory, after all the dear Sisters we have parted from in life and death. . . . Tell Rev. Mr. Daly a particular friend of his, Mrs. —, called to inquire for the Galway branch, hoping it would do well. Write soon ; let me know how all goes on. I cannot make up any excuse to write to Father Daly, as you say he is as kind as ever. If you would only complain I could then alarm him by saying I would go to Galway immediately to look after my poor fatherless children.

“All desire love to you and dear Sister M. Catherine. My respects to the bishop and Rev. Mr. Daly. Pray for me frequently and fervently.”

In September, 1840, Mother McAuley went to Galway to assist at the reception of Misses Christina Joyce and Frances Macdonald. The ceremony took place in the parish church in presence of an immense concourse. The whole community attended, the carriages of the parents of the young ladies to be received having been kindly placed at their disposal. The sermon was preached by reverend mother's great friend, Father Mathew. The young ladies were superbly attired, and Mother McAuley mentions that the white satin, lace, etc., of their elegant toilettes, "spoils of Egypt," were cut up for sanctuary uses before she left Galway.

On her return to Dublin she wrote to her old child, Sister M. Catherine Leahy, mother-assistant at Galway :

"I am delighted to find that you are so happy. You will never be otherwise while the spirit of your religious vocation animates your actions. The daily review and interrogation : What had God in view in calling me to this state? do I endeavor in every thought, word, and action to correspond with His intentions in my regard?—these are all-important. As I am certain you attend to them, happiness must await you, even when you have many charges to bring against yourself."

Mother McAuley sent a copy of an extract from a speech delivered by O'Connell at a banquet at Carrick-on-Suir to Mother Catherine Leahy, and another to Wexford. The Sisters had written to her to procure them some samples of veiling. "While providing for the head," she writes, "do not forget the poor feet, to which the 'Repealer' called attention at a public dinner : 'No country on the face of the earth is like Ireland. Look at the fairest portion of creation, educated and possessing all the virtues that adorn and endear life, forsaking their homes, and families, and friends, entering a convent in the morning of their days, to devote long lives to piety and to the promotion of virtue. Look at the Sisters of Mercy (hear, hear), wrapped in

their long black robes. They are seen gliding along the streets in their humble attire, while a slight glance at the foot shows the accomplished lady (cheers). Thus they go forth, not for amusement or delight—no ; they are hastening to the lone couch of some sick fellow-creature fast sinking into the grave, with none to comfort, none to soothe ; they come with love and consolation, and by their prayers bring down the blessings of God on the dying sinner, on themselves, and on their country (great cheering). Oh ! such a country is too good to continue in slavery (immense cheering).' This afforded great amusement here, each claiming for her own foot the tribute of praise.

"As a test of my humility I have [this speech] in my desk, to look at it occasionally," writes Mother McAuley jocosely, yet not without a purpose, for she wished to impress on all that, however poor her clothing may be, a religious ought to be a model of neatness and order from head to foot, as she herself always was, though her garments were of the poorest description allowable. While Mother McAuley was founding a convent in Birmingham Dr. Browne, Bishop of Galway, wrote to invite her to name a day on which she could be present for the profession of the Sisters who had been received with such éclat. She immediately forwarded the following reply :

" ST. MARIE'S, BIRMINGHAM, September 20, 1841.

" MY LORD AND DEAR FATHER IN GOD :

" I have just had the honor to receive your esteemed favor, and deeply regret that I am not to have the happiness of meeting my beloved Sisters on the joyful occasion of their holy profession. Even in this warm weather, my lord, if I remain in a room with a window open, I cough all night, and so disturb the poor Sisters who are near me. When I return to Baggot Street I expect to be confined to a close room, as the least blast makes me very troublesome for several days together. The good bishop here celebrated Mass for us yesterday. To-day Dr. Wiseman continues his course of lectures in the grand cathedral. He

commenced with the novel opinions of the sixteenth century, placing before the congregation the arguments of both sides. Right Rev. Dr. Walsh said there were at least twelve hundred persons present at the preparatory discourse, several hundreds of whom were Protestants. It is thought these discourses will produce many converts.

“ My lord, I should now apologize for encroaching on your valuable time, begging to thank your lordship for all your kindness to me and the Sisters, and entreating your charitable remembrance.

“ Your grateful child and servant in Christ,  
“ MARY CATHERINE McAULEY.”

Galway was not destined to see the holy foundress again. The profession of the novices took place in October, 1841, just one month before her death. It was a very grand but a very long ceremony. The Mass which always accompanies a profession among the Sisters of Mercy was not over till after three o'clock P.M. The dying mother wrote a few lines to Sister Mary Joseph Joyce, the senior professed, to whom, as bearing a remarkable personal resemblance to her deceased niece, Mary Teresa, she was greatly attached :

“ How sincerely, how joyfully I congratulate you on the completion of your ardent hopes and wishes ! What a sweet and blessed union you have formed ! Now it is that you must prove your gratitude by going hand-in-hand with your divine Redeemer; nothing to interest you but what relates to His glory. May He grant you every grace and blessing, and make you one of His dearest and best beloved ! ”

This sweet young Sister survived her holy profession a little more than seven years, dying early in 1849, a model of exactness to Rule and devotion to the duties of her holy state, especially the care of the sick poor. She was so blessed as never to lose her first fervor.—R.I.P.

On the same occasion reverend mother wrote for the last time to her “ own child and dear Sister,” Mary Teresa White :

“ How heartily I rejoice that all difficulties have been surmounted and that our dear, dear Sisters have been professed ! Thanks be to God ! How I felt for them—kept in the public church till three o’clock, fasting ! But the holy, the delightful view that God inspired them to take of their dear mortified Redeemer at that hour was well calculated to support and animate them. My poor Sister de Sales was disappointed at not going to you, but, as she is my constant, affectionate nurse, it was well for me ; and, indeed, I am a troublesome child. I have felt the last heavy days very much : great increase of the cough. Thank God ! this mild day has revived me. . . . I must try to write a few lines to my grandchildren. God bless and protect you all ! ”

The Sisters received and professed on the foundations Mother McAuley used to playfully call her “ grandchildren,” and she had for every one of them the affection of a fond parent. The Sister M. de Sales mentioned above as sister to Mother Teresa White had just returned from London, whither she had been sent the previous year to assist the Bermondsey foundation. She introduced the Order into Liverpool (1843), where she died, 1849.

Mother M. Teresa White was specially beloved by the holy foundress, and had been her travelling companion on many occasions. On hearing of her alarming illness in November, 1841, she at once started for Dublin to confer with her once more and get her last blessing for Galway, for herself, and for her beloved community. At midnight she reached the capital to find that her beloved mother had passed from earth four hours before her arrival—a loss which almost broke her heart, though, like the rest of the bereaved children, she humbly bowed her head in submission to the divine will of Him whom we should love as well when He takes as when He gives, as the holy foundress always inculcated.

## CHAPTER XL.

### THE WEXFORD FOUNDATION.

"A very pleasing young Person"—"We are proud of our little Maria"—Childhood of Maria Kelly—She weeps over the Sufferings of the Martyrs—Description—Proposals—Altar Society—Vocation—Journey—Conference with the Foundress—Maria enters St. Leo's—Reception and Profession—A new Mary Teresa—Labors among the Poor and Lowly—Recalls beauteous and fantastic Legends—"God Almighty between her two Eyes"—Carlow Community in 1840—Chapels—The Benedictines—Prison—Incidents—Poor Mamma—Anecdotes—Last Visit of the holy Mother to Carlow—She gazes at St. Leo's from the Dublin Road.

"A VERY pleasing young person called yesterday to say she wished to join the Carlow Sisters. Rev. Mr. McSwiney advised her to call here. . . . Her name is Kelly. She has a brother at the college. They live five miles from Carlow. I like her greatly—very nice-looking, and sweet countenance. . . . I referred her to Dr. Fitzgerald, and recommended *Mrs. Warde*\* in the highest terms. I hope she [Mrs. W.] will not disgrace my judgment."

The very pleasing young person with the sweet countenance mentioned in this letter (December, 1837) was the pretty, winsome Maria Kelly, as good as she was fair, of Castletown, who was destined to establish the congregation in Wexford.

The parents of this sweet child were upright, fervent, and devout, and brought up their family of five children in the fear and love of God and the daily practice of virtue. The little Kellys were all known in their quiet neighborhood as good children, but the palm of excellence was always

\* The mother-superior of the Carlow convent.

awarded to Maria, of whom the rest used to boast, saying: "We are proud of our little Maria." Even then the child used to say she would become a nun when she grew tall enough, though she scarcely knew what a nun was, and had never seen one. It was the pious custom of her home that one of the children should read aloud after dinner from the lives of the saints for the rest of the family, and in this way the little girl learned a good deal about the virgins, and confessors, and martyrs whom Mother Church commemorates, and often at the close of the pious lecture she was found sobbing over the torments the martyrs endured for the love of God and in defence of the holy faith.

As there was no superior school in their neighborhood, and as Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Kelly were ambitious to have their darling an accomplished young lady as well as a good Catholic, they placed her at Mrs. Keating's boarding-school in Dublin, where she remained several years. Here she was beloved by her governesses and companions, and acquired a good education for the time.

She wrote and read well, and had a pleasing and graceful way of expressing herself; was very beautiful, and had such a sweet, sunny countenance that people loved her so much that they forgot to admire her. On her return from school she at once, though quite unconsciously, attracted the notice of several gentlemen in the neighborhood who happened to be unprovided with life-partners. One of these in particular would have been agreeable to her family in that relation, and was in every way worthy of her, had her vocation been for earthly nuptials. With her parents' approbation he offered all he could offer, but the maiden gracefully yet firmly declared that her heart was irrevocably given to a heavenly Lover.

Maria now got up a sort of altar society (something rare at the time), and with other young ladies took care of the altar linen—a charge she regarded as an honor and a pleasure. She also catechised the children of the poor and

visited the sick, so that her life was a fitting preparation for the vocation to which it unconsciously tended. Her maiden days were passing by sweetly and usefully, but she soon felt a call to devote herself entirely to God and to renounce the world she was so well fitted to adorn. The child knew little or nothing about nuns, but the thought of leaving for ever her bright and happy home—a little paradise, as her friend Canon Pope called it—made her heart sink within her. A journey to Limerick, where she remained some time with one of her brothers, recently settled there, made her look at her vocation rather dispassionately. If he left home and all its endearments merely to have a better opportunity of gaining an honorable competence, why should she hesitate to leave all for the love of God? Determined now to enter a convent, she knew not where to find the one to which God called her. She had heard of this Order and that, of the cloistered and the uncloistered, and she admired them all without being attracted to any. Her anxiety was becoming painful, when she opened her whole mind to a fervent, enlightened priest, well known and deeply revered—Father McSwiney—who sent her at once to Mother McAuley. Her choice was soon made; after a conference with the holy mother she felt the peace and sweetness that follow a decision made in accordance with the divine will, and at once petitioned for a home in the Institute of Mercy.

About two months later, February 23, 1838, Maria, then in her twenty-fifth year, entered the Carlow novitiate. The ordinary six months' postulantship was reduced in her favor, and, being among the *First Seven* at St. Leo's, she was professed after one year's novitiate, June 11, 1839. As usual, the penetration of the holy foundress was not at fault in her estimate of this fair young creature, who, because she recalled so many traits of the beautiful and gifted Mary Teresa Macaulay, as much as from her devotion to the seraphic saint of Castile, was called in religion Mary Teresa.

The sweet face and the tall, slight form of Sister Mary Teresa soon became known to all the poor in Carlow. Wherever there were disgusting offices to be performed for the sick or painful services to be rendered them ; wherever sinners were to be reclaimed or sorrow to be assuaged—in the prison, in the gamblers' den, by the plague-stricken—ever and always on fire with zeal for the divine honor, there was Sister M. Teresa. It being a rule of the Institute that two Sisters always go out together, it was necessary to choose her companion from the healthiest and most fervent. Sultry heats and biting frosts were inconveniences our young apostle never noticed ; rain and sunshine were alike to her. When the Sisters besought her to spare herself a little, and hurry home so as to be at the first recreation, from half-past four to five, from which she often had leave to be absent, she would say : "Yes, I ought to be home sooner ; but, O my darlings ! if you knew what a joy it is to snatch a poor soul from the devil. Only think if sometimes we can prevent one mortal sin ! By and by, when you have, all of you, poor drunkards to look after, you will know what it is, and how little one feels the fatigue, or the inconvenience, or anything, if only one can do some little thing for our good God."

In the dens and purlieus where the scum of the population gathered Sister Mary Teresa soon became what Americans call "an institution." And her presence in these places, young, fair, and attractive as she then was, recalled many a poetic legend ; for people spoke of Una taming the lion, and of the beauteous maiden who, decked in gems rich and rare, roamed through the land, trusting to her maiden purity and the honor of her countrymen, in the golden days of Christian chivalry :

" Sir knight, I feel not the least alarm :  
No son of Erin would offer me harm ;  
For though they love women and golden store,  
Sir knight, they love honor and virtue more ! "

Though this sweet spirit roved at will among drunkards, gamblers, and street folks of every species, coaxed, admonished, and strove, in season and possibly out of season, to reclaim them, never did they utter an unbecoming word in her presence. They would surround her, yet at a distance, so great was their reverence, and they left her presence subdued if not converted. Our dear young Sister loved the poor and the wretched with a sort of divine passion. "It is to the prayers of the poor," she would say, "that I owe the grace of my vocation." And how these people reciprocated her affection ! To this day they speak of the wealth of love she lavished on them ; and one old creature expressively describes the spiritual beauty of her countenance by affirming that "God Almighty Himself was between her two eyes, glory be to His Holy Name ! "

Reverend mother was, as she pleasantly expressed it, "made young again" by the heroism of her fair, sweet protégée. Every visit she paid to Carlow confirmed her first impressions. And when there was question of extending the Institute to Wexford Sister Mary Teresa, though but twenty-seven years old (1813-1840) and little more than a year professed, was the first among a singularly gifted community that presented herself to the mind of the foundress as a fitting superior for the proposed branch.

At the period of the Wexford mission, towards the end of 1840, the Carlow community consisted of twenty-one members, nearly all so young as to be under age for fasting, though they all conformed to the custom on fast-days. There was but one church in Carlow, the cathedral (about five minutes' walk from the convent), in which a place was curtained off and enclosed near the sanctuary for their use ; here they heard Mass whenever they had no Mass at home, which was but seldom. The various chapels in Carlow, however, brought all the priests into requisition on days of obligation. There were the college chapel, the two convent chapels, the chapels of the jail, the Magdalen and

Lunatic Asylums. The Sisters of Mercy had but one school, a pension-school,\* for the poor children were taught by the Presentation nuns since 1809. Very Rev. James Maher, then professor of Sacred Scripture in Carlow College, was confessor; another of the college priests acted as chaplain. When the Sisters opened their House of Mercy, September 24, 1840, the Magdalen Asylum was discontinued. It had been established by Rev. John England, afterwards Bishop of Charleston, S. C., who, no doubt, saw cause for its establishment at the time, but it had quite changed from its original purpose: the inmates were all good, some of them old maids who wanted a home, and all, about twelve, helped to support themselves by washing, etc. The people looked upon the institution with immense disfavor and hated the very name of it, saying it was a shame that a Magdalen Asylum should be allowed to exist in their quiet, orderly, and virtuous town. The Sisters used to visit the inmates every Sunday to instruct them, and from the name of the matron—a nice old lady, Mrs. Bennett—they playfully styled them “the Benedictines.”

The Sisters also visited the jail, where they often found prisoners under sentence of transportation for various periods, some of the cases being very sad indeed. Once they found a poor woman, with a little child five or six years old and an infant, among the convicts. “Sister,” she said, “I stole some eatables because I could get no work, and I could not see my little children starving.” On the next Sunday they found among the prisoners a grown daughter

\* Mother McAuley would not allow the Carlow nuns to open any school that could interfere with the school taught by the Presentation nuns. It was much the same in Cork: the Sisters of Mercy, on account of the nearness of Rutland Street house to the South Presentation Convent, did not open schools for the class generally taught by Presentation nuns till they removed to their new convent, St. Marie's of the Isle, in a different district. The holy foundress would never under any circumstances locate her convents near kindred institutions, or allow her children to open any establishment or branch that could interfere with the prosperity of another convent. She would have them gather up the pupils who were going to schools where their faith and morals were in danger, or the children going to no schools, not those already in good hands.

of this poor creature, whom they knew to be a very good girl, and on their expressing surprise to see her in prison she said : "I knew I was doing what I oughtn't to do when I stole the umbrella, but how could I see my poor mother and the babies leaving the country and crossing the seas without me ? But," she continued exultingly, "I'll be with her and them, for we're all to sail in the same ship to-morrow." What a crime to be expiated amid the horrors of Van Diemen's Land, and what a comment on the administration of justice in Ireland ! At the great unerring Tribunal before which we must all appear how many sentences of earthly tribunals will be reversed, and in how many instances may not the judge have to change places with the prisoner !

On the day of the opening of the House of Mercy three Sisters were received, one of whom was to have been received on a previous occasion—Miss Julia Redmond, who was destined for Wexford ; but she fainted just before the ceremony and was carried to her cell, where in the course of the day she showed the worst symptoms of incipient typhus fever. Her father and brother, with several other friends, had come from Wexford to see her receive the white veil ; but as she was an only daughter and tenderly beloved at home, her mother obstinately refused to consent to her remaining in the convent. This was the only cross poor Julia had ; she said to one of her young companions : "Sister dear, my heart is breaking with grief for poor mamma's feelings." "Poor mamma" came at once when she heard of Julia's illness, determined, as she told the bishop, to bring her daughter home dead or alive. His lordship was most kind and conciliatory with Mrs. Redmond, for whom he felt deep sympathy, and gave her leave, subject to the superior's approval, to remain with her daughter as much as she pleased. She was allowed to assist in nursing the patient during the day ; but death was hourly expected, and poor Julia had been anointed in anticipation of that

event. But her good constitution, with the best of nursing, bore her through, and after several weeks she was pronounced out of danger. A weary convalescence followed, and when she was completely restored her mother took her home in triumph.

During the following month several postulants entered, among them a friend of Julia's, Miss Anna O'Brien. They corresponded occasionally, but Mrs. Redmond's objection to her daughter's becoming a nun grew stronger than ever. But on hearing that Miss O'Brien was in distant retreat for reception Mrs. Redmond, to the amazement of every one, conceived the most ardent desire that her daughter should be received with Miss O'Brien, and desired Julia to write to ascertain if it could be done. A dispensation was easily procured under the circumstances, and Julia hurried back to Carlow. Two days of the solemn retreat had just elapsed, but all the novitiate Sisters cried out that Julia had already made them. "I remember Julia's joy on that occasion," writes one of her companions forty-one years later, "and the joy of the whole community, for there never was a more united one." After resting an hour or so Julia hurried off to be in time for the next exercise, so that three instead of two received the white veil on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 1840.

Mother McAuley came to Carlow in November, 1840, to take home Sister M. Aloysius Scott, whom she designed for the Birr foundation, and to conclude arrangements for the Wexford house. Sister M. Juliana Hardman, who afterwards founded the Birmingham convent, accompanied her. The Sisters found their beloved mother looking haggard and fatigued, but as sweet and saint-like as ever. "We all felt," wrote one of them, "that her presence diffused a holy influence through the house." One of the seniors asked to speak to her in presence of Mother Frances about some trouble of mind which distressed her. The three met in the community-room; what passed at the interview

remained a secret, but it became known that Mother McAuley closed the conversation by pointing to that impressive picture of our Lord crowned with thorns and holding a reed, while she observed that if we looked more to our suffering Lord our trials would seem very light and consolation would soon come to our hearts.

For the superiorityship of the projected establishment at Wexford the Sister selected by Mother McAuley had but one disqualification, and that, happily, was one that must lessen every day. All saw the wisdom of the choice, but all were grieved to part from one whom they so tenderly loved. The holy foundress was unable to attend personally to the opening at Wexford, as it was to open the same month as the house at Birr; but everything relating to it was done in accordance with her wishes, and she devoted much time and thought to the peculiarities of the place, and the best means of meeting them so as to satisfy all parties as far as possible. In no one of her foundations did she display, and continue to display, a more lively interest.

When Mother McAuley returned to Dublin everything was in readiness for the Wexford opening. The four Sisters who were to remain had to bid farewell to their loved companions and their sweet convent home. Never had St. Leo's looked more beautiful than when the foundress saw it for the last time, about eleven months before her death. We can well imagine her gazing from the Dublin Road at the elegant structure in the midst of garden and shrubbery—its noble proportions, the green veranda, the staircase leading to the garden, the solid front, the graceful wings, above all the chapel with its semicircular arches—and thanking God that her children were so well lodged and so worthy of their beautiful destiny in God's house.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### MOTHER TERESA KELLY.

The Wexford Butcheries—Wexford a Health-Resort—Stella—Terrible Memories—Wexford must have the Sisters—Journey thither—Episcopal Hospitality—Arrival at Wexford—Household Effects—Early Labors—Richard Devereux—The Orphan House—Father Maher's Sermon—Letter—Classes for the adult Poor—Men and Women—Hard Cases—“She bates the Priest out and out.”—Zeal for Souls—High Standard of Perfection—Love of Humiliation—Thirst for Calumny—Aspirations—Cappoquin—Dungarvan—Benefactors—Chapel-of-ease—Why the Loretto Sisters were brought to Gorey.

EVERY one has heard of Wexford in connection with the unsuccessful contest of '98. After a fierce and sanguinary struggle lasting some four months, with varied success—now on the side of the insurgents at Gorey, Oulart Hill, and Enniscorthy; again on the side of the English, Welsh, Scotch, and Hessian troops at Ross, Naas, Carlow, and finally at Vinegar Hill—the County Wexford, deluged with the blood of the bravest, was vouchsafed a change of suffering, and pitchcaps, picketing, and other barbarities succeeded open warfare until the dominant parties felt themselves fully and diabolically avenged. Horrible traditions of these tortures were rife in 1839 when the Bishop of Ferns, a diocese which includes the whole of Wexford and part of Wicklow, applied for Sisters of Mercy. The bishop himself—and, indeed, the foundress, from a distance—had seen the evil times, the effects of which are apparent to-day, for the families ruined or exterminated in what Irish history expressively calls “The Butcheries of Wexford” were countless. And among the inducements held

out to the Sisters in 1839 to settle in Wexford was the hope, or rather certainty, of being able to do something for the children and grandchildren of the brave men who perished in the fruitless strife of '98. In Wexford, certainly, no one "feared to speak of '98." To have bled with the patriots was better, in the eyes of this unconquered and unconquerable people, than any patent of nobility.

Dr. Keatinge had been bishop for twenty years, as coadjutor or successor to Bishop Ryan, when he applied for Sisters of Mercy. Wexford was much spoken of in those days ; the celebrated Dr. Doyle and the poet Moore traced their origin to this historic county. The town of Wexford, at the mouth of the Slaney and within sight of St. George's Channel, containing about twelve thousand inhabitants, was still, despite its terrible associations, a favorite health-resort. In bygone days it had been visited, for sake of the ferruginous waters of a neighboring spring, by no less a celebrity than the hapless Stella, so mournfully linked with a great man who did a patriot's work for their forefathers in the preceding century—Dean Swift.

The details of the cruelties which decimated the heroic people of Wexford again and again are harrowing even at this distance of time, and Mother McAuley, who could remember seeing the blackened limbs and withered head of a brave priest hung high on the Dublin Bridge as a terror, could never hear of the "Wexford Butcheries" without a shudder. But the spiritual destitution of the poor of the town afflicted her still more keenly, and she longed to be able to send her children as Angels of Mercy among them. And though, during her short life as a religious, her Institute was unable to supply one-fiftieth of the demand for her Sisters, she determined that Wexford should have them, however long other places might have to wait.

The Wexford house was the third convent founded in the diocese of Ferns since the Reformation. Many wealthy Catholics were among its early benefactors ;

among them the bishop, Very Rev. Dr. Sinnott, Canon Lacy, Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury—herself a native of Wexford—and Mr. Richard Devereux hold the foremost rank.

Early in December, 1840, Mother McAuley wrote to the superioress of the Carlow house :

“ My anxiety about the opening in Wexford increases every hour. Commence the visitation of the sick as soon as possible. Let four go out at a time, and do not let the least difference appear in dress, etc. . . . They [the Sisters] are so long expected that every eye will be turned on them ; and, *while we place all our confidence in God, we must always act as if all depended on our own exertions.* Get Father Maher to preach at the profession, and beg of him to assist you in forming this new branch ; a good beginning is of great importance.” In view of subsequent events the following passage would seem to have been added jocosely : “ I sincerely hope Father Lacy will not furnish the convent in a worldly style.”

The little community for Wexford consisted of Mother M. Teresa Kelly and Sister M. Gertrude Kinsella ; Sister M. Aloysius Redmond, the novice of whom we have already spoken ; Sister Brigid Hackett, a lay Sister, whose spirit of prayer united with labor caused her to be regarded as a model of edification, and two postulants. Sister M. Gertrude and Sister Brigid were in remote retreat for profession. Mother Frances Warde and Mother Cecilia Maher, future foundresses, respectively, of the Institute in the United States and New Zealand, accompanied the missionaries, to remain some months until the early difficulties should be partially surmounted and the installation of the new community happily effected. Father Maher, so often mentioned as an eloquent preacher and a true and constant friend of the foundress and her children, chaperoned the little party. They left Carlow under a threatening sky, and as they proceeded to Enniscorthy the rain poured

down in torrents, the thunder boomed, and the lightning flashed ; and the fierceness of the storm made it impossible for the ladies of the party to alight, even when the horses, unable to keep their feet, backed the coach into a ditch. Good Father Maher's office of escort was not quite a sinecure on this unpropitious journey. The coachman went on foot to the next town to beg a loan of a horse to extricate the nuns from their perilous position. After a two hours' sojourn in the ditch, which sojourn was anything but monotonous—wind, rain, lightning, and the dreadful prospect of sinking more deeply into a quagmire that might prove a quicksand varied the scene sufficiently—the poor wayfarers were rescued.

Their condition on reaching Enniscorthy was deplorable in the extreme. But in the pleasant society of the amiable bishop, Dr. James Keatinge (consecrated in 1817), at whose house, by previous arrangement, they remained for the night, recent discomforts were soon forgotten. All were young, cheerful, and light-hearted ; the Carlow superioress, who matronized the party, being under thirty. Having done honor to his lordship's elegant hospitality, they joyously retook the road next day. It was the Feast of the [Immaculate] Conception, and, in imitation of the holy foundress, they all liked to begin their important works on our Blessed Mother's days. Their first abode in Wexford was akin to the stable of Bethlehem : a roof and four walls shielded them from the weather, and the bareness of their dwelling from the public eye. Each benefactor thought, no doubt, that the others had furnished the house with necessaries, and, as is usual under such circumstances, what is everybody's business was left undone. One of the priests who came to welcome them kindly went out to borrow some blankets for them, as the cold was intense. An inventory of their household effects would have done credit to Claristes of the strictest observance. The kitchen was their refectory, the dormitory was a sort of shed across

the yard ; a few cooking utensils and a delft mug adorned a solitary shelf ; and a stylish brass candlestick, quite out of keeping with its vulgar surroundings, is preserved to this day as a memento of the happy hard times of old. The establishment contained four rickety chairs, which were carried up-stairs and down-stairs as needed ; a Sister, called to what was by courtesy styled the parlor, carried a chair for herself and another for her visitor. When the signal was given for Office each chorister was seen going to the room intended for a choir laden with her chair ; and as there were but four chairs for eight persons, some had to learn to sit on the floor or *dos-à-dos* on a chair.

Crosses and privations multiplied, but nothing daunted, baffled, or disheartened the zealous nuns. Natural gayety, intense energy, and a loving desire to do great things for God carried the poor little band on to success. "The walking nuns" had never before been seen in Wexford, but soon they were known in every street, lane, and alley. The cancer patients thought there was no hand so deft and soft, and no voice so sweet and sympathetic, as Mother Teresa's ; and her children emulated her devotedness. Benefactors soon came forward, among whom the first and best were Very Rev. James Canon Lacy and Mr. Richard Devereux, who placed "heart, time, and purse at the Sisters' disposal, and only complained when they used all three too sparingly." Richard Devereux, a prosperous merchant, was one of the few rich men who are stewards rather than owners of the wealth with which God blesses them. No good work was ever undertaken in his native diocese which he did not aid, and, like the merchant-princes of history, he was an enthusiastic patron of literature. He founded a *free public library in every parish in the diocese*—that is, forty libraries ; a more useful application of wealth cannot well be imagined.

It was immediately proposed to give the new nuns charge of the Wexford Orphan House, and Mother

McAuley, who was kept minutely informed of everything that transpired, wrote to her informant :

“From what you say of the Orphan House I should think it quite suitable. I recollect one of the objections started here was that the engraved stone with *Orphan House* could not be removed, and that the Sisters might be regarded as matrons of the establishment. This, I think, could never be. I am certain the title would be changed immediately, whatever stone was up. You might propose having *Institution of Mercy* substituted, as some public tribute seems necessary to the memory of the benefactors.”

In another letter the foundress says: “The Sisters in Wexford are to get the parochial house. Mr. Devereux gave eighty pounds towards preparing it for them. God will ever bless him.”

The senior nuns remained over two months at Wexford. During that space four postulants entered, and a public ceremony was held in the church, at which Sister M. Gertrude and Sister Brigid were professed. Rev. Father Maher preached the profession sermon, which was published. “I read the whole of Father Maher’s sermon for the Sisters,” wrote the foundress, “so you may say my lungs are good yet. It is much spoken of as an excellent explanation of the two states, and is equally instructive to both.”

Mother McAuley, who was founding a convent at Birr while the Wexford foundation was in progress, wrote from that town January 12, 1841: “I feel so grateful to God for the prosperity of Wexford that if we should not get a postulant for a month it would not cast me down.” And, under a later date, she hopes the Carlow nuns are not persecuting their superioress with letters to return, it being essential that she and her companion should remain as long as possible to consolidate the new establishment. The Wexford convent was dedicated to St. Michael, and the great archangel seemed to take special care of it.

When all was in working order the Carlow Sisters returned to St. Leo's. Many subjects came to beg admission ; a new era of prosperity at length dawned on St. Michael's, and the earlier crosses began to slip off all too soon, as the fervent Mother Teresa thought, from the shoulders of the young foundresses.

The instruction of adults was a favorite duty with Mother Teresa, as with all the earlier members. She opened classes for them at the convent, and was indefatigable in preparing them for Holy Communion and Confirmation. As the Wexford priests were few in proportion to the people, they used to send the men at one hour and the women at another to be instructed by Mother Teresa ; and if there happened to be a hard case in the town, such at once fell to her share. Quite unconsciously she possessed the gift of genuine eloquence ; and when she spoke of the sufferings of our dear Lord and the ingratitude which offends so good a Father, her large, soft eyes were suffused with tears, nor was she always able to restrain her emotion. Her rough auditors would weep and sob as her tender, burning words fell on their ears ; in her hands they became pliable as little children and readily promised whatever she desired of them. The Sisters used to say Mother Teresa had a *knack*, a peculiar grace, when there was question of reclaiming obstinate sinners. The comments of her poor auditors were amusing : "She bates the priest out and out, God bless her ! " "Sure we'd rather be listening to her than to Doctor Sinnott himself." And the priests, especially the gifted Dr. Sinnott, then president of St. Peter's College, and rarely endowed with eloquence, fully agreed with them.

Mother Teresa was in prison with the condemned, whom she won to God when all others failed. She went to the lodging-houses where the peasants now and then put up, and coaxed them to confession when they would not go for any one else. When missions were given she collected

the street waifs and men and women of the lowest classes, and, having prepared them for the sacraments, put them under the charge of the most zealous missionary she could find. People came to her in every emergency ; her advice was sought on all manner of questions ; and there are not a few in religion, and even in the priesthood, whom she helped to realize a lofty yet humble vocation and prerogative

Surely none can do these things if God be not with them. If the zeal of this worthy daughter of a saintly mother was great for drawing sinners to God, it was still greater for making her own heart a dwelling fit for Him. The first and the last in His Sacramental Presence ; reducing her rules to practice with a perfection not often attained, even by the most exemplary religious ; loving her God above all, and her neighbor for His sake, her actions were done "in the spirit of the most profound, sincere, and unaffected humility." Her sentiments on every virtue were sublime, and her conduct agreed with them. Once, when Sisters were conversing on the different standards which souls adopt on embracing the religious life, she said, pointing to a blazing fire : "Mine was that if a superior told me to put my hands into that grate, and gather up the burning coals and carry them up to the top of the house, I would do it immediately." Though she spent nearly all her religious life in office, she was but too glad to lay down the burden when her term expired ; nor was the youngest in the novitiate more submissive or more humble than she who had trained them all in the ways of perfection.

In her genuine love of humiliation and thirst for calumny she attained the higher degrees of humility. Once she acknowledged to a companion that her great spiritual ambition was to come to that point that she would love to be spoken ill of. "Sensitive as she was by nature," says her late superior, "I have seen her positively exult with joy when the cross was presented to her." Though naturally neat, even to daintiness, the worst and poorest of every-

thing was her choice. "As a companion she was most entertaining," says one of her spiritual daughters; "but there was always a something about her, as if she never lost the sensible presence of God." When alone or in her cell the other nuns often heard her break out into ejaculatory prayers, expressive of profound humility, contrition for sin, and burning love of God; she besought Him to give her "the love of contempt and obscurity, infirmities, insults, and interior pains." The motto engraven on her profession-ring she used often to repeat with intense devotion: O Lord Jesus! I am Thine. Save me!

In 1850 Mother Teresa founded a house of the Institute at Cappoquin, on the Blackwater, within a few miles of the famous Trappist abbey, Melleray, and in the diocese of Waterford and Lismore. Here the story of the poverty and privations of her early days in Wexford repeated itself; it was the first convent ever established in this small, most romantically situated town, and the Sisters dedicated it to their beloved mother's name-saint, more in memory of her than of her seraphic patroness. Four years later Cappoquin extended the congregation to Dungarvan, a pleasant watering-place in the same county. In 1853 the zealous mother placed her children at New Ross, and in 1858 at Enniscorthy, the cathedral town of the diocese. Everywhere they began in the greatest poverty: the first night at New Ross they slept on the floor; and at Enniscorthy they had to move from place to place five times before they secured a permanent shelter. Their generous friend, Mr. Devereux, gave the munificent sum of one thousand pounds towards the erection of a new convent, and Bishop Furlong, who succeeded her old friend Dr. Keatinge, subscribed liberally for the same object. Besides, Mr. Devereux built at his sole expense the fine House of Mercy, for young girls of good character, which adjoins St. Michael's Convent of Mercy, Wexford. The same princely benefactor helped Mother Teresa to build

the small Gothic church at Enniscorthy which serves as a chapel-of-ease to the cathedral. This was the last of Mother Teresa's great deeds, for she was called home the very day the first Mass was celebrated in it, consoled by the thought that those who lived too far from the cathedral would, in future, have less difficulty in sanctifying the Sundays and holidays by hearing Mass. Like Mother McAuley, Mother Teresa added a day-school for young ladies to every convent she founded.

In 1842 Very Rev. Patrick Sinnott, V.G., applied to her for a colony for Gorey, a small town in the northern part of Wexford, where he had built a Gothic convent for their reception, mainly through the liberality of Sir Thomas Esmonde. But as the good mother had not a Sister to spare, she was reluctantly obliged to refuse her dear friend. He happened to mention the circumstance in a letter to a friend at Rathfarnham, and Mother Teresa Ball at once offered to supply him with Loretto nuns. This led to the introduction of that congregation into the diocese of Ferns. By what seems a special providence the presiding Sister at Gorey, Mother Benedicta Somers, a native of Wexford, was a kindred spirit with Mother Teresa Kelly in devotion to the poor. She gave all she could give, and she was wont, in her humility, to express a hope that this almsgiving might atone for the spiritual poverty of herself and her community.

The Gothic structure, built by Pugin, whose ideas of comfort and convenience in dwelling-houses were never very popular among sensible women, had a far more imposing appearance than the old rookery at Wexford in which Mother Teresa spent such "happy hard times," but it is doubtful if it were more comfortable or convenient. "As to the house," said Mother Benedicta, "I shall only say, may God enlighten the architect!"

## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE WEXFORD FOUNDATION, CONCLUDED.

Ferns—Bishop Roche's Account—The Clergy have not degenerated—One of God's Heroines—Anecdotes—Ejaculations—False Accusation silently borne—Closing Scenes—Death precious in the Sight of the Lord—The Babe of Bethlehem—Christmas Eve—“O God! be merciful to me”—Suffering a Joy—Touching Incident—Dr. Furlong—A Christmas Funeral—Beautiful Letter of Condolence from the Abbot of Melleray—Tablets—Conclusion.

IT may not be superfluous to say here that Ferns, once a large and populous city, is now a mere village, in which the bishop who derives his title from the old place has long since ceased to reside. Its cathedral church, under the invocation of St. Aidan, was amongst the richest in the whole kingdom. Dr. John Roche, Bishop of Ferns, gives a most edifying account of his diocese to the Holy See, at the height of the penal laws, December 1, 1629 :

“The parochial clergy are . . . nowhere better, and, through the mercy of God, there is not a single priest in the diocese whose fame is in the slightest degree impaired. . . . There are two houses of Franciscans—one at Wexford, the other at Ross. These religious are good and laborious, living in concord with the secular clergy, and respectful and affectionate towards myself. There are also two Jesuits who live in Ross and labor assiduously in instructing the poor. . . . There is one Dominican who dedicates himself to the same sacred mission.”

From this glorious record the clergy of Ferns had in no wise degenerated in Mother McAuley's time, nor have they in the forty years which have elapsed since her happy de-

parture. Those of Mother Teresa's day were the stanch supporters of every good work she undertook for the glory of God, the relief of human misery, and the good of souls.

In 1873 two of the nuns at St. Leo's, who had been novice-companions of Mother Teresa in the bright, early days of Carlow, gave their recollections of that saintly woman to Miss Kathleen O'Meara, who has made excellent use of the same in that charming tiny volume appropriately entitled *One of God's Heroines*, which should be a *vade mecum* with every Sister of Mercy. To these venerable religious, and to the mother-superior, still living (1881), who received Maria Kelly into the convent in 1838, the writer of these pages is under many obligations :

"With all their gratitude Mother Teresa and her valiant little group loved the cross too well to let it be too quickly lifted off their shoulders; they had chosen a hard service for their Lord's sake, and they grudged to see the thorns brushed aside and the stony path made soft. Poverty was so sweetened by love that the empty cupboard, the cheerless hearth, the unfurnished cell had lost their terrors. Then Mother Teresa's natural gayety and energy bore herself and her children buoyantly over everything. Nothing daunted, nothing baffled or disheartened her. Badly lodged and perished as they were, they went about, in rain, frost, and snow, for hours every day, attending all the sick people they could hear of, and soon there was not a sick person in the whole town whom they were not made to hear of. By degrees they began to reap the sweet fruits of these labors; the poor soon came to love them, the rich to admire and respect them; in a little while the tiny seed sprang up, the tree was broad enough for many to come and rest beneath its shade. There was little rest for those who planted it. Their lives were an unbroken round of toil. The sick and the poor came first and claimed the largest share of their devotion, but no one was excluded: the Sis-

ters of Mercy were at the beck of everybody ; neither class nor creed made any difference.

“ Mother Teresa loved the poor personally ; it was a pleasure and a delight to her to be with them, to talk to them, to listen to them. There was no repugnance to be overcome ; love for the destitute and suffering was a natural instinct with her, an inborn sympathy, just as love of music or nature or warfaring is with others. This gives us the secret, in a great measure, of the extraordinary influence she obtained over them. Once persuade the poor you are fond of them, and you can do anything with them. Many a droll story is told of Mother Teresa’s conquests. She went one day to see a poor woman named Waters, who was dying. The poor creature recognized Mother Teresa’s voice, and cried out in a kind of rapture : “ Ah ! thin, is it yourself, Mrs. Kelly ?\* Sure it was meself that loved you, and you loved my son Tom above all the young men in Carlow—the heavens be his bed ! But whin he died my poor heart broke and everything slipped from me.”

Mother Teresa was eminent, if not heroic, in all the moral and religious virtues. She had the most tender piety ; the Sisters who slept in cells adjoining hers frequently heard her pour forth her soul in the most fervent aspirations during the silence of the night : “ O Eternal Father ! ” she would exclaim, “ I offer Thee all the acts of love produced by the adorable Heart of Jesus on earth, especially while He was agonizing on the cross. O my God ! I offer Thee the profound annihilations of Jesus humbled and crucified. O my merciful God ! I put my whole trust in Thee. Send forth Thy holy angels to prepare a dwelling for Thee in my soul.”

As to the vows of religion, where all were poor Mother

\* As a relic of the days of persecution nuns are often addressed in Ireland as *Mrs.* ; thus Mother Teresa was sometimes called *Mrs. Kelly*. The Ursuline, Presentation, and other nuns were obliged to appear as seculars for many years after their establishment, and wore the religious habit only on the more solemn festivals and with closed doors.

Teresa contrived to be the poorest. If possible, she would never have anything new, but would make her clothing from the cast-off garments of the other nuns; she took things indifferently as they came, but if she ever exercised a choice it was in order that she might appropriate to herself the worst of everything. As to her vow of chastity, being a passionate lover of the cross, she bore about in her body the mortification of Christ, and practised the beautiful virtue of religious modesty so as to remind those who conversed with her of the presence of God. "Her obedience," writes her superior, "was prompt, simple, docile. She had a noble mind as capacious as her great heart, but when consulted on any important matter she gave her opinion with great diffidence, always putting it as if not from herself, and almost invariably adding: 'But you are the best judge.' "

In her prayers she besought God to send her love of contempt and obscurity, infirmities, insults, and interior pains. Once a priest who had shown great kindness to the community was led to believe that Mother Teresa had used her influence unfavorably in his regard on a certain occasion, and he gave her to understand that he was very much disappointed and hurt by it. Though she felt this most acutely, she never said a word in her own defence, and for fifteen years bore all in silence. "I shall send for him on my death-bed," said she, "and when he understands how it had all been he will pray the more fervently for my poor soul." Her death was too sudden to admit of her doing this, but the message was transmitted through her superior, and the revelation it contained filled with grief and pain the good priest who had unwittingly misjudged her, and raised Mother Teresa still higher in his esteem.

Like all humble souls, Mother Teresa was deeply grateful, and she was greatly pained that a priest who had shown such kindness to the Institute should believe he had reason to think her guilty of ingratitude.

We have now to mention the closing scene of the saintly life of Mother Teresa Kelly.

Towards Christmas, 1866, cholera of a most malignant type broke out at Enniscorthy. The good mother, as she was affectionately called, spent among the plague stricken every moment she could snatch from the duties of her office, and, as she had escaped the cholera of 1832 and other less fearful visitations of the same awful disease, no alarm was felt for her. She was engaged, too, in providing a crib for the inmates of the poorhouse who could not go out to visit the convent chapel.

Mother Teresa's representations of the Infant Jesus at Bethlehem were the delight of her numerous poor, whether at Wexford, Enniscorthy, or Ross. They thought nothing of walking many a weary mile to witness the wonder, while the exclamations of the peasantry at the unwonted sight of the Babe in the manger sometimes bordered on the ludicrous : "O the darlin'!" "Glory be to God, look at the sweet Mother!" "Oh! be quiet, won't ye? She's goin' to spake!" And Mother Teresa would look at the simple crowd, not less delighted than themselves at the joy her inartistic representations gave to their guileless souls during the pleasant Christmas holidays.

When the eve of her favorite Christmas came she rose as usual and gave the morning call—a duty she always performed. All met in choir as usual. Office and meditation were not quite over when a sudden faintness overcame her about half-past six. She took no collation, but read her letters and transacted the business of the house till noon, when she appeared to be seriously ill. The doctor, who was hastily summoned, looked very grave and ordered her to bed at once. Then the doleful news went forth : "Our mother is dying of cholera." After Extreme Unction she asked the attendants to withdraw, that she might be left alone with God for an hour.

A telegram informed her Wexford children of her dan-

ger, and four of them started for Enniscorthy. The bishop came, too, and recited the prayers for the agonizing, but was unable to proceed when he came to the recommendation of her departing soul ; tears and sobs choked his voice. He had known her a fair, sweet girl in her father's house, and had watched with ever-increasing interest over her beautiful life.

When the cathedral clock tolled the midnight hour—just as the priests in many a convent were beginning the midnight Mass or the midnight *Angelus*—the bright and beauteous spirit of this valiant woman passed to its eternal repose in the bosom of the Father.

Not for a moment was her bright mind clouded ; the confessor who assisted her declared that her soul was as detached as if it had been already set free from the prison of the body ; that not a single tie held her back.

Sad indeed were thousands—the poor, the clergy, but above all the Sisters—when God gathered into His heavenly garden this choicest flower of the Wexford community. Her last act was to arrange about the distribution of the Christmas relief to the poor ; her last intelligible words were : “O God ! be merciful to me.” The violent pangs of cholera which convulsed every limb, and blackened and distorted her grave but still beautiful countenance, never distracted her thoughts for a moment from her heavenly Spouse. It was said that suffering had long since come to be a joy to her, and this she proved in that last supreme hour. “She spent herself for the poor,” said the sorrowing bishop when he announced to the people their awful bereavement at his first Mass, Christmas, 1866.

Her holy corpse was brought back to Wexford for interment. As it was borne from the convent door to the hearse a poor woman pushed her way up to the coffin, and, heedless of contagion, fell upon it, weeping bitterly and speaking to Mother Teresa as if she were still alive and listening to her. The holy remains sleep in peace in

the little cemetery of St. Michael's Convent of Mercy, which her presence had blessed and brightened for so many years. The bishop, Dr. Furlong, once a professor at Maynooth, and in one way or another connected with the Sisters of Mercy for over thirty years, was stunned by the blow the death of this cherished spiritual daughter inflicted on him. There was a spiritual affinity between them not common, except in souls united to God and to each other in the highest degrees of charity. No other death could have afflicted him as this did; yet he bowed his head in humble submission to the divine will, and surrendered this beloved daughter in Christ to the Spouse who called her to His embraces. He remained at her side, prostrate with grief, and at intervals pronounced the words of absolution over the dying nun, as did also three missionary fathers who remained with her till the last. And the same prelate stood over the grave in which they were laying her to rest, and, amid sobs and tears, prayed to her and for her.

Her holy remains were a sad but oh! how deeply appreciated Christmas gift to the spiritual daughters whom she had so tenderly loved, and whom she had taught by precept, but far more by example, to tread in the higher walks of religious perfection.

While Mother Teresa was establishing the convent at Cappoquin, and on several other occasions, she had many business transactions with the venerable abbot of the neighboring Cistercian monastery at Melleray, Rt. Rev. Dr. Fitzpatrick. The following letter which his lordship sent the Sisters in the early days of their bereavement is—considering the office of the writer and his practical experience in the highest paths of the spiritual life, together with his well-known gifts in that most abstruse of sciences, the discernment of spirits—a beautiful tribute from one saintly soul to another. Never have the virtues of a holy religious been commemorated by a worthier panegyric :

"I will tell you candidly I would rather *not* write to you on this occasion. I scarcely know what to say in a letter, though in conversation I could tell you much that would edify you and give you, if possible, a still higher opinion of your most dear departed Sister.

"I never could discover a defect in her; I never perceived what I could consider the slightest venial fault; I never saw a momentary cloud passing over her countenance; I never heard a word from her which I could have wished unspoken. I never found her unrecalled. So much for what I did *not* see. A few words upon what I *did* see. In Mother Teresa I saw Christian and religious perfection precisely as I should wish to see them in every nun not only of your admirable Order, but of every Order, whether active or contemplative. In her I found fully realized my notions of human perfection. In her presence I never could forget the presence of God. The very mention of her name will, to the last moment of my life, call forth in shadowy array before my mind all those virtues and perfections which constitute that most lovely, most beautiful, most delicate of all God's works, 'the nun sanctified.' "

Illuminated tablets, and in the chapel at Wexford a mural brass tablet, perpetuate the memory of this sweet and saintly religious in the convents which she founded. Save a change of date as to the foundation, the inscription is the same on all :

"Pray for the soul of  
our well-beloved and revered  
MOTHER MARY TERESA KELLY,  
who founded this convent  
December 8, 1840.  
*Upon whose soul sweet Jesus have mercy!*"

The brass memorial was erected by her life-long friend, Very Rev. James Canon Lacy, who did not long survive

this best-beloved and most deeply revered of his spiritual children.

The history of the Order of Mercy in Wexford is so mixed up with the personal history of the illustrious woman who founded it there that it may be studied in her life. The communities of Wexford, Ross, and Enniscorthy contain fifty Sisters of Mercy, the Wexford orphanage one hundred and thirty children, and the House of Mercy averages about thirty inmates. The schools for the rich and the poor attached to these establishments have been singularly successful.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### THE BIRR, OR PARSONSTOWN, FOUNDATION, 1840-1841.

Birr—Killaloe—Difficulties between Bishop and Pastor—The People cling to the Pastor—Sad Consequences of the quasi-Schism—Worse than Kings town—A similar Expedient—To heal the Breach the Foundress wishes to remain in Birr—The most angelic Sister M. Aloysius Scott—Letters—Wexford and Birr Twins—Letters—Mother McAuley meets her dear Father Murtagh—Her Influence over him—His Monument—The Sun shines too brightly—Descriptive Letters—The Vicar's Sermon—Mr. Carlile—Sir Patrick J. Keenan, C.B., Head Commissioner of Education, and the Superioress of Baggot Street Brother and Sister—Energetic Description of Schismatics—Their Conversion.

THE twelfth and last house of the Institute established in the lifetime of the holy foundress in Ireland was at Birr.

Birr, which, like Athlone, has been called the centre of Ireland, is situated in a rich and beautiful country. The salubrious air and the mineral springs in the vicinity gave it some local celebrity as a health-resort in Mother McAuley's time. It is situated in the southwestern extremity of King's County, not far from Tipperary, and the silvery Brosna sparkles through its green fields and radiant gardens. It is on Lord Rosse's estate, and is much frequented by scientific persons interested in the heavenly bodies, Lord Rosse's telescope at Birr Castle being the largest optical instrument in the world. Ecclesiastically, Birr is in the ancient diocese of Killaloe. It contained over four thousand Catholics and less than one thousand of all other denominations.

Killaloe, near the site of the ancient Kinkora, the palace of Brian Boru, was once a place of great importance in Tho-

mond, or North Munster, but has dwindled to a mere village of about sixteen hundred inhabitants. It is on the Clare side of the Shannon, and is much frequented by amateur fishermen for the delicious salmon and eels with which the Shannon abounds at this point. These historic regions were familiar to Mother McAuley from her southward journeys in early days. The bishop still resides at Killaloe, though Ennis is the most important place in the diocese, which, though small, stretches into three provinces and six counties.

Over fifty years ago this ancient diocese gained a most unenviable notoriety. Difficulties between its bishop, Dr. Kennedy, and its pastor, Rev. W. Crotty, in which the right could not, and the wrong would not, yield, were a source of grief to the fervent and scandal to the weak. Everything was done to heal the breach, but in vain. Even Dr. Doyle had the humiliation to fail here. Invited by the bishop to use his immense influence in the cause of truth, he went to Birr in 1826, reasoned with the refractory priest, preached thrilling sermons to the poor people, but all to no purpose. Mr. Crotty, having been suspended for some alleged irregularity, refused to forgive his ordinary for what he held to be an injustice, and attempted to mend the perhaps imaginary fault by a real one a thousand times more grievous, opening a conventicle on his own account, to which he invited his flock. The poor people, who regarded their quondam pastor as a persecuted saint, with a sort of wrong-headed chivalry refused to desert him in his troubles. It had always been the proud boast of Ireland that neither heresy nor schism had ever originated on her soil, and all good Catholics were grieved at the baleful consequences of Mr. Crotty's obstinacy. The poor man showed a steady vindictiveness strangely out of keeping with his previous character, and defied all authority that was brought to bear upon his unhappy case.

It was in 1840, while on a temperance mission to Birr, that Very Rev. Theobald Mathew became acquainted with the full particulars of Mr. Crotty's deplorable recklessness and its sad consequences. No stranger could visit this pretty town without seeing the evils wrought by the poor Crottyites. In Irish history it was famed for the "O'Carroll Feuds," but the present feuds acquired it a far more unfortunate celebrity. Only a few remained faithful. The conventicle was always crowded with gentle and simple, who regarded their dear old pastor as a wronged man and listened excitedly to his eloquent denunciations of all Church authority. Priests could do nothing but pray ; they were loathsome in the eyes of the Crottyites. No Crottyite would walk on the same side of the street with a priest. To Father Mathew alone in the whole country would they listen, but only while he kept to the neutral subject of temperance.

Here was a far sadder state of things than Kingstown had shown, where there had been wrong in practice but no one impugned the faith ; here doctrines were in danger and practice had ceased. A similar expedient suggested itself to the Apostle ; he thought that these great, rough men, who openly defied priests and bishops, might yield to the gentler ministrations of the Sisters of Mercy. He had for years been on intimate terms with Mother McAuley ; his old home in Cork was not far from Rutland Street, and he had been a friend and benefactor to her children from their first arrival in the city of his adoption, 1837. He visited her several times in Dublin, and, having pleaded the cause of "poor Birr," as she affectionately called St. Brendan's town, with his wonted eloquence, obtained from her a promise that Birr would be her next foundation. He plainly told her that the conversion of the people who had hitherto proved incorrigible must be her chief inducement, there being no foundation fund or endowment offered as yet for the projected convent.

But Mother McAuley's intense appreciation of the gift of faith, and the devoted loyalty to the Church which was planted in the depths of her soul, had already pleaded the cause of Birr. So eager was she to labor in reclaiming the poor half-schismatics that she expressed a wish to remain altogether in this most unpromising field—a wish she never expressed in connection with any other of her convents. "I would like to remain in Birr as one stationary," she wrote to Carlow. "I should not fear begging my bread." Happy would she have been if she could by her life, much less by her exertions, repair the rent the enemy of souls had made in Catholic unity in that place.

"Give me for Birr," wrote "the Apostle," "truly spiritual persons—souls that rely entirely on God's providence."

Such the holy mother sought for this most trying mission, to which she destined the most saintly religious then at St. Mary's—her "most angelic Sister M. Aloysius." But the most angelic Sister was then thought to be in consumption, and the foundress had been summoned from Galway a little before to assist, as it was feared, at her death-bed. Under her mother's care she had rallied, and Dr. Fitzgerald, who had known Eliza Scott since the day of her baptism, besought the foundress to send the invalid to the mild air of Carlow, which she was quite willing to do. On July 3, 1840, she wrote: "I wish very much Sister M. Aloysius was in Carlow for a while. She does not improve much. Her loss would, indeed, be felt, she is so much beloved by all. After retreat I will urge her going. She is afraid of giving trouble; though, indeed, she never gives any that could be avoided. In her present state she requires assistance."

The patient was scarcely settled in Carlow when reverend mother wrote: "I am quite uneasy at not getting a few lines to say how our dear Sister M. Aloysius is. Mother-assistant thinks she is confined to bed and that you wait till she is better. I trust in God it is not so. Will

you tell me how she is and if her appetite is improving?" Under a later date the foundress apologizes for not going to Carlow: "It is providential that I do not go to Carlow, lest I should be tempted to take Sister M. Aloysius away. Sister M. di Pazzi is anxious for her return; Father O'Hanlon desires me positively not to think of it. This month will be most useful to her." On October 26, 1840, she playfully gives her "most angelic Sister" a hint of what is coming: "Sister M. Aloysius must soon try what she can do, so tell her to prepare, as she says she is quite well. Nothing more likely to keep her so than reasonable occupation of mind and body. She has got petting enough for one season."

In November, 1840, Mother McAuley went to Carlow, bringing as companion Sister M. Juliana Hardman, of Birmingham, who "has that kind of cough which a little change of air removes, but has had it rather too long." Everything for the Birr foundation had been arranged with "the Apostle" before they left for Carlow, so that it used to be jestingly said that Wexford and Birr were twins—both originating December, 1840.

Meanwhile the holy foundress made all possible inquiries about the state of affairs, determined to have information from every available source, in order that her view might be many-sided and that nothing of the peculiarities of "the situation" might escape her. "Once I was called on to talk awhile with the foundress," writes a venerable religious, in 1881, who was in the Carlow novitiate when Mother McAuley visited St. Leo's, 1840—"an honor I was quite unprepared for. It happened this way: The Birr foundation was then projected, or rather settled on, for Mother McAuley had come to bring home Sister M. Aloysius Scott, who had been for a few weeks recruiting with us, and whom she destined to be superior of the foundation. Knowing that my sister and I were from the County Kilkenny, she thought we might know something of the

place. Neither of us had been there, but a short time before my entrance a curate had come to our parish who had been parish priest in Birr, but had resigned on account of the dreadful state of affairs. This good priest often spoke of the place and its sad condition, so that, knowing something in this way, I was able to answer some of Mother McAuley's queries. . . . Sister M. Aloysius was herself from Kilkenny, which, perhaps, was one reason for her being sent to Birr. But, indeed, she had qualities for that position independent of birthplace, for she was a truly good and most useful religious—quite a model in every way."

Mother McAuley, who never accepted the smallest favor without gratitude, expressed the warmest thanks to the Carlow community for the kindness shown the sweet invalid. "I am fonder of Sister M. Aloysius since she came home than ever I was," she writes, "she shows such affectionate gratitude for your kindness to her." This is the same Sister of whom the foundress wrote from Limerick in December, 1838: "I never knew Sister M. Aloysius perfectly till now. She is unalterably sweet and placid, and unceasing in her efforts to promote the objects of the Institute. The sweetest we ever had could perhaps be a *little* ruffled, especially on occasions like this; but she is never moved in look or manner. She is everything at all times. How did I live so long with such a person and not know her?"

The day after Christmas, December 26, 1840, the Sisters for the Birr foundation bade farewell to the parent house. The party consisted of Mother McAuley, Sister M. Aloysius Scott, Sister Mary Teresa White, Sister Mary Rose Lynch, and Sister Anna Maria McEvoy. From letters of Mother McAuley we extract a full account of this peculiar but most interesting foundation, the last, except Birmingham, in which she was personally engaged. As they reached Birr on the Feast of St. John Evangelist, the convent was dedicated to the disciple whom Jesus loved.

“I am anxious to write to you from my strange habitation. How many new beds have I rested in! When I awake in the morning I ask myself where I am; and on the last two or three foundations I could not recollect for some moments. This is a good old house, delightfully situated; fields and gardens all around it; it must be particularly healthy. Sister M. Aloysius is remarkably well. I firmly believe Father Mathew has been the agent for her final recovery, he prayed so much for the Birr foundress. We travelled to Tullamore on Saturday. . . . At Eghish we dined with our dear friend Father Murtagh, the parish priest; our own priest Dr. Spain, the dean, and the vicar-general came to meet us. We had a teetotal entertainment—coffee served immediately after dinner. We arrived in Birr about six, said our prayers, and went to rest. Next day we saw several ladies—one a candidate, Miss Egan, educated at the Thurles [Ursuline] convent.”

Mother McAuley’s “dear friend Father Murtagh” had been promoted from the curacy of Tullamore to the parish of Eghish in March, 1837. He continued, though at a distance, an enthusiastic patron of her Institute, and, indeed, of every good work. It is remarkable that every priest closely connected with Mother McAuley imbibed in an eminent degree her zeal for the education of youth, the decoration of the house of God, and the performance of every work of mercy. Father Murtagh, like herself, was a stanch teetotaler, eager to aid the great cause of temperance by the most powerful of all means—example. Her influence over this most exemplary priest did not cease with her life. In 1846 he was promoted to an important parish in Westmeath, where, as in other places, his works outlive him. Wherever he sojourned handsome churches replaced the thatched cabins of the era of persecution, and numerous splendid buildings for educational purposes the hedge-schools of earlier days. He died among his people, for whom he labored to the last. The monument which covers the remains of this dear friend of the holy foundress bears the following inscription :

*In memoria æterna erit justus.*

Lord have mercy on the soul of  
the Reverend Walter Murtagh, P.P. of the  
united parishes of Castlepollard and  
Castletown, who departed this life  
the 30th of March, 1863, in the sixty-fourth year  
of his age and the fortieth of his ministry.

His life was edifying as his  
death was holy.

In remembrance of his pastoral zeal and  
priestly love for his flock his sorrowing  
parishioners have erected this monument.

Requiescat in pace. Amen.

“We were very busy all day Monday,” continues Mother McAuley: “bespoke our tables, entrance-bell, tin teapot, chairs,\* etc.; received visitors and commenced our retreat at the usual time; left the reception-rooms and lived in our cells. How sweet, how blessed is our life, which affords so much solid consolation and enjoyment when all that the world values is shut out from us! Everywhere I thought the sun was shining even too much! I do not think any one in the midst of Christmas festivities was so happy as we were.”

“Everywhere I thought the sun was shining even too much.” This is a curious passage. Certainly the writer cannot mean the material sun, whose beams could scarcely be oppressively brilliant on a dull December day in an exceptionally cold winter. And that the Eternal Sun of Justice should irradiate her beautiful soul until she was compelled to cry out, “Too much, O Lord!” is not wonderful; but that such an acknowledgment should escape one who so strongly inculcated “reserve” † when speaking of spiritual

\* The above shows that the Birr convent was not supplied even with the most necessary articles. Almost every convent founded by Mother McAuley was founded in abject poverty. Even where founders were rich and liberal God permitted that they should forget to provide the most essential requisites. If there was a bed for her companions she was thankful—often there was not; she herself mostly slept on the floor. The clothing worn during the day did duty also at night. But all this was turned into a pleasant jest by these fervent souls.

† Here are some of reverend mother’s beautiful instructions on “reserve.” They are addressed to a novice whose attention she wished to be directed in a special man-

favors is strange indeed. There is nothing else of the kind in her whole correspondence. "Jesus was silent"—this was the subject of her daily meditations. It hushed the complaints when they rushed to her lips; for how could she complain when Jesus was silent? It schooled her into reserve as to the gifts bestowed upon her, that she might be able to say, "My secret to myself." Once only did the superabundance of celestial favors throw her for a moment off her guard, and then she, who preferred Calvary to Thabor, complains that the sun shone too brightly—too brightly for the light of an exile, too brightly for one who would humbly place herself among the happy millions of whom her Jesus said: "Blessed are they that believe and have not seen."

The holy foundress continues her lively narration:

"This is a fine old house, one room as large as our old school-room in Baggot Street. It is beautifully situated, open country all about, and view of gardens and fields. Our garden is small. I have never seen to any convent such a one as in Charleville. We are quite close to the parish church, a fine building. We have some hope of being joined by postulants. One candidate has started already. I suppose you heard that Sister M. Frances and six Sisters have gone to Wexford. She remains for two months. Sister M. Aloysius Scott is superior here. She is

ner to this guardian of recollection. The pious intentions of the ladies who spoke of entering in Birr did *not* evaporate in talk:

"My dear Sister, accept my thanks for your kind note, which was quite cheering. You are timely in thinking of your profession, and I feel satisfied you will make due preparation for it, and that you will never be unworthy of so great a favor. I expect to see a sweet and holy reserve in all my dear Sister-novices, which will be as a shield around them. This word 'reserve' is most extensively useful for meditation; if we acquire religious reserve we shall never speak too much, write too much, grieve too much, laugh too much; and when we do all things in due order, and do not exceed in any, then a good foundation will be laid for advancement in religious perfection. May God grant to us all this beautiful reserve that restrains words, looks, and actions, and continually whispers, 'Go back—stop—say no more.' It is much to be desired and of immense value. . . . Some person has said that a great barn must be opened in Birr to admit all that are talking of going there. Perhaps their pious intentions will all evaporate in talk for want of that heavenly reserve we were speaking of. Now, like a dear good child, pray for me, and believe me most affectionately yours in Jesus Christ."

delicate ; I trust God will restore her. She has been a most humble, edifying Sister.

“Praying God to grant to you and to each of us the full benefit of our renovation, and divine grace to perform all our holy resolutions, and begging you to pray for me, I am, etc.”

Under a later date :

“Sister M. Aloysius was up before five New Year’s day, and did not get her breakfast until after ten. She rises at the first call every morning, and looks remarkably well. After Mass the vicar-general said : ‘My dear people, I have a present to make you. I have a New Year’s gift to bestow, the most gratifying a pastor could give. I present to you the SISTERS OF MERCY, who, by their example and pious instruction, will draw down upon our town the blessings of Heaven. I recommend them to your respectful attention, and I beseech God to bless you and them.’ We had great laughing about this, saying that he might have tried us a little longer and not made a present of us so soon.

“The unfortunate Mr. Crotty is indefatigable in his evil works. He is joined by Mr. Carlile, lately a Commissioner of Education. They have the same church and preach the same doctrine—namely, that ‘nothing is to be feared but Popery.’”

The Mr. Carlile of whom Mother McAuley writes was Rev. James Carlile, a Presbyterian clergyman from Scotland, who was the first Resident Commissioner of the National Board of Education in Ireland, 1831, but resigned that office in 1838 and devoted himself more exclusively to proselytism. Right Hon. Alexander McDonnell, also a non-Catholic, succeeded Mr. Carlile. But in 1872 a Catholic was appointed to this important post, which he still retains. The sister of Sir Patrick J. Keenan, C.B., (the present Head Commissioner of Education in Ireland) is the mother-superior of the parent house of the Sisters of Mercy, being the seventh in succession from Mother McAuley—a curious coincidence, which places the most important religious training-schools in Ireland and the government training and model schools, with the whole ma-

chinery of national education, under the control respectively of a sister and brother.

"We are getting quite at home," continues the foundress, January 12, 1841; "Sister M. Aloysius strong and lively, Sister Martha a real treasure, and our postulant useful in every way—quite a different person from what she was in Baggot Street. Nothing like foundations for rousing us all. Our expected Sister is really in affliction at not joining us. Her father does not refuse consent, but says he must have time to prepare his mind. He cried here on Sunday. I fear she must make a *runaway*. We hear of other postulants, but nothing near a close. You will see by the writing that I can scarcely hold the pen. . . . Slow workmen here—no choir yet. Sister M. Aloysius is out every day. She has a sick priest and an old lady in her own charge. Sister M. Teresa has two unfortunate Crottyite families, obstinate, though most miserable in mind. I never saw anything so like the description the French priest, Monsieur de Luers, gave at George's Hill of some possessed persons he had seen in a remote part of France, who could not bear the sign of the cross. These unhappy people will not raise the hand to make it, or even suffer you to help them; and, while they pour out dreadful curses on the miserable man that deluded them, they will not move one step to obtain reconciliation. It seems as if they could not. I never saw schismatics before. They are worse in appearance than heretics. The latter think they are right; the others *know* they are wrong, and yet are obstinate. If any of them make the sign of the cross when we are with them, it is in the style of a stubborn child who is forced to say what is against his will."

Mother McAuley hoped to get to Dublin towards the end of January, but was obliged to remain six weeks, during which she labored hard, in no way sparing herself, and going on the visitation a good deal with the younger Sisters to train them to that important duty. The weather was unusually inclement, the snow lay thick on the ground, and a series of fresh colds injured still further her already impaired health; but she worked on incessantly. And her zeal was abundantly rewarded by the gradual conversion of the poor schismatics.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### THE BIRR FOUNDATION, CONTINUED.

Injurious Reports—Important Letters—Advocates in Rome—Always to be considered Benefactors—Text of the Confirmation of the Rules—Retreat—Letters—Failing Health of the holy Mother—She is prevailed to remain beyond the usual time in Birr—And to return—She describes the Success of Father Mathew—Conversion of the Crottyites—And of the apostate Leader—Particulars.

TOWARDS the close of January, while still occupied in her laborious duties at Birr, Mother McAuley was obliged to steal some moments from her poor schismatics to encourage and sustain her dear daughters in other places, who were greatly afflicted at the renewal of the injurious reports which had led her to make application to the Holy See on a previous similar occasion. Mother Angela Dunne placed the whole matter before her, and sought counsel as to what answer ought to be given to a person whose position entitled him to respect, and who had been making very minute inquiries on the subject. The following is reverend mother's reply :

“ Most Rev. Dr. Murray obtained the full Approbation of His Holiness for our Order in the year 1835. . . . When the Rule was completed he affixed his seal and signature, but we did not ask a confirmation of it from the Holy See until we had reduced it to practice. When I was in London last January a petition for ‘Confirmation’ was presented, accompanied by letters of strong recommendation from his Grace the Archbishop of Dublin; the Lord Primate, Dr. Crolly; the Bishop of Cork, Right Rev. Dr. Murphy; the Bishop of Limerick, Right Rev. Dr. Ryan; the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, Right Rev. Dr. Haly; the Bishop of

Ossory, Right Rev. Dr. Kinsella; and the Bishop of London, Right Rev. Dr. Griffiths.\* Rev. Mr. Colgan, of the Carmelite Order, Dublin, was the bearer of a most gracious answer. He wrote to me to say that if he could remain some time longer he would bring home the documents. I spoke with Dr. Cullen, President of the Irish College at Rome, when in Dublin; he said it was certainly granted, but that in Rome they were slow in issuing final documents."

On the 30th of January, 1840, Mother McAuley, in reply to some suggestions from Carlow, had sent the following:

"As to the application to Rome, I did exactly what was marked out for me—a petition from the mother-house, a memorial from the Archbishop of Dublin, praying a Confirmation of the Rules, to which his Approbation is attached; letters of recommendation from the bishops in whose dioceses branches of the Order are established. This has been fully executed. The episcopal letters were as favorable as possible. I am sure Very Rev. Father Maher is sufficiently interested in us to do all in his power. I think a private letter to his nephew would have more effect than one obtained through influence, and I am certain he has done whatever he thought likely to promote our success."

In the last surmise Mother McAuley was perfectly correct. Father Maher and Dr. Cullen, especially the latter, used their influence in Rome, which was great, in her favor. As Dr. Cullen had seven near relatives among the Sisters of Mercy, Mother McAuley had full means of learning, through their occasional correspondence with the future cardinal, how her affairs at Rome progressed. Dr.

\* It is probably by mistake that the name of Dr. Crotty, Bishop of Cloyne, is omitted, as Mother McAuley says elsewhere that strong letters of recommendation were despatched to Rome by *all* the bishops who had Sisters of Mercy in their dioceses. Among the prelates who aided Mother McAuley at this crisis, though they had not as yet convents of Our Lady of Mercy in their dioceses, were the Lord Primate, Dr. Croly, Bishop Blake, Bishop Kinsella, etc. All these, with Pope Gregory XVI., who confirmed the Rule, and the many ecclesiastics who used their influence for the Approbation and Confirmation of the Rules—as Dr. Cullen, Dr. Wiseman (afterwards cardinals), Dr. O'Connor (afterwards Bishop of Pittsburgh, U. S.), etc.—are daily prayed for as benefactors of the Institute.—R.I.P.

Griffiths, who presented the petition to His Holiness, used to be colloquially called the Bishop of London, as in the above letter, though his official title was Bishop of Olena and Vicar-Apostolic of the new London district.

The doubts and questionings of many concerning the Rule had been weighing heavily on Mother McAuley's mind since the objections were first started. It seemed as though people expected that her Institute, unlike all others, should have been confirmed the moment it sprang into existence. In 1839 she had written to the above bishops for their recommendations, and we give here as a most interesting document the letter which she wrote to Bishop Murphy, of Cork, on that occasion. It is dated Baggot Street, November 19, 1839 :

“ DEAR AND MUCH-RESPECTED LORD : His grace called here yesterday to affix his Approbation and seal to the copy of our Rule going to Rome, and left with me his memorial to the Holy Father. Your own Mary Clare, the best Latin reader amongst us, finds that your name is not introduced.

“ My lord, the primate has sent us a strong recommendation, and Dr. Kinsella a letter addressed to the Pope, . . . and I am sure that you, who have so long honored us with your patronage and valued friendship, will not withhold what would certainly give great weight to our application.

“ My lord, in the year 1830 His Holiness gave permission for our novitiate to be served in a Presentation convent; in 1835 our venerated archbishop represented our successful progress, when the Holy See imparted to us a full Approbation. Dr. Murray then prepared [caused to be prepared] our Rule, and finding it, after due trial, well suited to our different duties, we now ask for its final Confirmation. We take all our documents with us to London on Monday next, and indeed, my lord, I should feel the parcel very light without a small tribute from you.

“ I have the honor to remain, dear and much-respected lord, with great respect and gratitude, etc., etc.,

“ MARY C. MC AULEY.”

The alteration previously suggested by Bishop Murphy in the formula of the vows—namely, the clause, “and the service of the poor, sick, and ignorant,” added to the three vows common to all orders—was accepted by the Holy See. The Sacred Congregation made no change in the formula, except to introduce the word “approved” before “Rule.” The Confirmation for which Mother McAuley so ardently sighed and prayed did not reach her for many months yet. We give a translation :

“As a society of religious women, called SISTERS OF MERCY, has been instituted in Dublin, founded chiefly by the zeal and energy of a most religious woman, CATHERINE McAULEY, and erected with the approbation of the Most Reverend Daniel Murray, Archbishop, and as very many bishops have desired the Confirmation of this same society by the Apostolic See, the Sacred General Congregation of Propaganda Fide, held on the 20th of July, 1840, at the instance of the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Paul, of the Holy Roman Church, Cardinal Polidorio, having considered how much good has already been attained, and what may naturally be expected in the future, from the institution of that same society which is devoted *chiefly*\* to the succor of the poor; to the alleviation, by all possible means, of the sufferings of the sick and infirm; to the protection of women whose virtue is in danger—has judged and decreed that His Holiness be petitioned in his goodness to confirm the Rule and Constitutions of the above-mentioned society in the form in which they have been above put forth; the Sacred Congregation at the same time prescribes that the vows taken by the members of the said society be simple so long as it will not have been otherwise decreed by the Holy See.

“This decree of the Sacred Congregation having been submitted to our Most Holy Lord, Gregory XVI., by the Most Reverend Ignatius Cadolino, Archbishop of Edessa, the secretary of the same Congregation, His Holiness, at an audience given on the 6th of June, 1841, approved of all, in all its parts, and moreover CONFIRMED in his goodness

\* *Chiefly*, not *solely*.

the Rule and Constitutions of which there was question, in the manner as above signified.

“Given at Rome, from the Palace of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, the 5th of July, 1841.

“JAMES PHILIP CARD. FRANSONI, Prefect.

“IGNATIUS, *Archbishop of Edessa*, Secretary.”

As soon as Mother McAuley had quieted the anxieties of her distant children she applied herself with redoubled zeal to rectify the deplorable condition of the Crottyites. Dr. Kennedy, Bishop of Killaloe, and Very Rev. John Spain, parish priest and vicar-general, approved and blessed and seconded her efforts to make arrangements for the training of the children in Catholic principles and reclaiming the many adults who had gone astray through evil influence.

The Birr convent was founded in great poverty. The house, though spacious and respectable in appearance, was very old and damp ; and as that winter, 1840-1841, was unusually severe, the mother-foundress caught a severe cold, which remained with her till her happy departure to a better world in the following November. The Sisters suffered much from the severe weather during the retreat for the Renovation of Vows, from December 28 to January 1. They renewed their vows in the church New Year's morning, 1841, as their own chapel was not ready.

Birr was the most difficult foundation which Mother McAuley ever undertook. Recognizing that God's blessing is the only true means of succeeding in His work, she began her labors in that town by a three days' retreat, which she would not postpone, so eager was she that the business of this town should be begun by a special season of prayer.

On the 3d of February, 1841, she writes to Galway :

“I am so petrified with cold that I can scarcely hold the pen. What comfort it gives me to hear of your continued happiness ! I could not express the gratitude I feel for the parish priest's affectionate kindness to you ; and, next to

the glory given to God, I rejoice that his expectations have not been disappointed. Your little Institute is much spoken of. Please God, one year will forward it greatly. Our postulant was received here yesterday in a quiet little choir like your own. Miss Egan entered, a very nice person, . . . very desirable indeed ; also a lay Sister, thus making three in six weeks ! Sister M. Aloysius continues well. She has met some Kilkenny friends—a priest who has known her papa twenty years, and a Mrs. S—. Sister M. Rose has met a priest who was curate to her uncle, and Sister Anna Maria another priest, so they are getting quite at home.

“ Dear little Sister M. Rose looks like an angel instructing the poor, unfortunate people who have been led astray by the schismatical party. She has them constantly around her. . . . I had written to say I should return on Monday. This has been overruled. I must stay a week or ten days more. . . . I will not expect a letter from you till I return to our dear old habitation, where I shall never again see all my dearly loved Sisters—all strange faces now ! They all say that the first separation from kindred was a *joyful sorrow*, but that separations in religion are *bitter sorrows*. But what must it be to me, who never met one unkind Sister yet ? This is a gloomy subject. We will all meet in heaven. Oh ! what a joy even to think of it. God bless you, my very dear Sister M. Teresa ! Give my affectionate love to dear Sister M. Catherine and each of the happy flock.”

Later the foundress wrote to Carlow :

“ I leave this Monday. Some remarks have been made on my being twice absent during the short novitiate of the English Sisters. . . . Sister M. Aloysius is about in all the bitter cold, a very busy little woman, entering on her new state very quietly and very efficiently. We saw little to expect at first ; now a bright light is dawning. Sister M. Cecilia had three bishops to entertain on Sunday and two on Monday. She likes the primate and Dr. Wiseman very much.

“ P.S. Since I mentioned to Sister M. Aloysius that I was going I have found her crying and must try and remain eight or ten days more. Besides, I promised to read and explain part of the Rule for our postulant, at which I will work diligently to help my poor Sister M. Aloysius, who

cannot speak much. She has got a nice lay Sister, strong and good-humored."

On February 5, 1841, she wrote to Dublin :

"MY DEAR SISTER M. CECILIA : On receiving your last letter I commenced writing to say I would be home on Monday next ; but Sister M. Aloysius was greatly agitated, and, although I have these feelings always to encounter [whenever she left the Sisters], yet in her case I was afraid of excitement and gave up. We have spoken quietly and rationally on the subject, and she is satisfied that I should return Monday week.

"We have had a great battle to make about Miss E. Thank God it is over ! She is worth a little trouble, now in her postulant's dress. Sister M. Madeleine looks very well in her white veil. Another is likely to come. Miss E. is the most important person to catch in this town. . . . As we hope to meet so soon, I will tell you no more.

"I feel the frost most acutely in my right side from the hip to the ankle. I have put on a great flannel bandage with camphorated spirits, . . . and trust in God it will, like a dear, good old acquaintance, carry me safe back. . . ."

Mother McAuley returned to Dublin on Thursday, February 11, 1841, and announced her arrival to her dear children in Galway by a letter which opens thus : "Here I am again since Thursday, as usual weary of foundations and ready for more. I find two more invitations before me ; indeed they must wait."

"The most angelic Sister M. Aloysius" did not allow Mother McAuley to leave Birr without promising to return very soon, and in reply to an invitation to recuperate in the mild air of Carlow she wrote : "I must wait for change of air till May, when I have in view another toilsome journey to Birr. It would not stand without aid. I had the kindest of notes yesterday from Father Mathew, God bless him ! He fixed Ascension day for the ceremony. Four here are preparing to sing and play, all possible excitement being required." In the same letter she informs Mother Frances that she has sent the mistress of novices to Birr, as she was

ailing and had to assist at the ceremony. In May, 1841, Mother McAuley wrote to Carlow: "Sister M. Cecilia is better, but still weak—getting exactly the same treatment as you gave Sister M. Aloysius. She writes: 'I can eat, drink, sleep, and pray, only as directed, and, seeing that each of us cannot have her own way, I seek refuge in submission.' "

The toilsome journey to Birr was accomplished at the appointed time, and the ceremony, which was the "clothing" of the postulants, Miss Mary Anne Heenan and Miss Susan Egan—in religion Sisters M. Joseph and M. Vincent—took place in the church with all possible *éclat*. Most Rev. Dr. Kennedy officiated and Father Mathew preached. "The bishop," writes Mother McAuley, "went through the ceremony as if he performed it every week. He is a nice celebrant, and very kind and pleasing. The 'Apostle' received thousands into the Temperance Society. When the people surround him he has a most plaintive way of saying, 'Ah! don't pull me, please.' "

The mother-foundress continued to take the greatest possible interest in Father Mathew's peculiar mission. Of the change wrought by total abstinence in a few months she writes thus energetically:

"The publicans are in terror at Father Mathew's approach. Another visit, they say, will break them. What an agent he has been in the hands of God! You can scarcely form an idea of the moral improvement throughout the country. We passed through populous towns on fair-days without hearing an angry voice—men, women, and children well dressed and all most peaceable and happy. This proves what the special grace of God can effect, though bestowed on but one man, yet so as to go forth among millions by the agency of his touch. Creatures are converted who never could keep a promise made to God or man, and who frequently violated the most solemn oaths when intemperance was in question. Persons of strong mind and good education have never given evi-

dence of greater resolution than these thousands of weak, ignorant, obstinate creatures are now manifesting."

As the convent of Birr was founded under peculiar circumstances, it had a large share in the maternal solicitude of the holy mother, and she continued to sustain and help it in every way. The first object of its foundation—the conversion of the Crottyites—was soon accomplished. It is frequently mentioned in her letters. "Thank God!" she writes, "the poor, deluded souls are returning very fast and preparing to approach the holy sacraments. Little Sister Mary is following them, and begs we will all unite in the Thirty Days' Prayer during April [1841] for the conversion of the apostate leader.

"I try to moderate her zeal. I am really afraid she would speak to him if they met in any poor place, and this would be exceedingly wrong." It is hardly necessary to say that the foundress never allowed the Sisters to introduce controversy, though she required them to be able to give to every one that asks a reason for the faith that was in them.

The Birr schools were very largely attended: Mother McAuley mentions four hundred and fifty as the number of their pupils—a fact which by itself alone proclaims that the schism which had grieved the fervent and scandalized the weak for some twenty years past was now at an end.

Even the apostate leader was granted to their prayers. Mother McAuley had one interview with him, of which the writer does not know the particulars; but she said that, except Bishop Nolan, she had never met any other ecclesiastic whose whole demeanor was more expressive of every priestly virtue. It was, no doubt, owing to the prayers of those whom he had scornfully styled "poor, deluded dupes" that he sought, and we hope found, mercy through the ministry which he himself had exercised for years with a zeal and fruit that secured him unbounded influence

over his simple-hearted, impulsive flock. Very Rev. Dr. O'Brien, of All-Hallows', Dublin, writes :

"God heard their [the Sisters'] prayers. I was waited on some years ago by the unfortunate apostate, who looked the very victim of heart-broken sorrow. He wept long and bitterly, and ever and ever kept crying out: 'Oh! the pride of my rebel heart; what could I expect? Disobedience—disobedience has been my curse from first to last.' The interview took place in the college chapel," All-Hallows', Dublin, some thirty years ago.

Those who witnessed his heroic penance hoped, and indeed felt, that it was accepted by Him who wills not the death but the conversion of the sinner. Indeed, Mr. Crotty's fine natural talents, his prepossessing appearance, and his irreproachable life in the earlier days of his ministry were not the only circumstances that awakened sympathy for him, even in the minds of such as knew that he was using God's gifts against Himself. There were those, too, who thought that had he been less sternly dealt with he had never attained so unfortunate a celebrity. But it is always more easy to account for such a rebellion than to justify it. And, as we have asked elsewhere, who could have thought that there lay dormant in the breast of that meek, exemplary priest passions which a few untoward circumstances could lash into such frenzy?

## CHAPTER XLV.

### THE FOUNDATION OF BIRR CONVENT, CONCLUDED.

Developments—Reception of Miss A' Beckett—Resignation of Office—Mortal Illness and Death of the most angelic Sister M. Aloysius—Her Successor—Trials of a new Species—Death of Bishop Kennedy—Declining Health of Mother Egan—Death—Characteristics—A fearfully sudden Death—Mother A' Beckett—Her Silver Jubilee—Visit of Mother M. Vincent Whitty—Statistics—Conclusion—Dancing Letter.

FOR several years successes of every kind blessed the Birr convent. Over five hundred children were entered on the books of the parochial schools, and the superior school opened for young ladies was proportionally well attended. An industrial school followed, which took the place of an orphanage and a House of Mercy, and to-day contains one hundred inmates. The visitation of the sick was a most important duty here as a means of reaching many poor Crottyites who could not otherwise be brought under the influence of the Sisters. In February, 1842, Sister Mary Rose Lynch returned to Baggot Street, and Sister Mary à Beckett came from Baggot Street to Birr. In August Mother Mary Aloysius Scott was attacked with severe hemorrhage of the lungs, and the reverend mother of the Dublin house, Mother di Pazzi Delany, who had succeeded the venerated foundress, came to Birr to receive Miss Beckett at a public ceremony in the church, at which the Hon. and Rev. George Spencer preached. On October 19, 1842, Sisters Mary Clare and Mary Vincent were professed by dispensation; in January, 1843, Sisters Anne Cleary and Mary Brown were received, and, as the community was now quite numerous, Sister M. Teresa

White returned to Baggot Street. The old house was becoming worse and worse, until it was impossible to repair it. Towards the close of 1843 Mother M. Aloysius had another attack, which turned to consumption—a disease to which she had always had a tendency. Being wholly unable to attend to any of the duties of her important office, she resigned it in January, 1844, after three years' successful administration, and at her request Sister Mary Gertrude Blake was sent from Dublin as temporary superior until Sister M. Vincent Egan, whom Mother McAuley had pointed out as an embryo superior, should have gained more experience. On the 31st of May, 1844, "the most angelic Sister M. Aloysius Scott" passed from earth, her mission being fully accomplished: not a single schismatic was left behind her.—R.I.P.

In October, 1845, Mother Frances Warde, who had gone on the American mission from Carlow (1843), came to Birr, with the permission of the superior of the parent house, Mother M. Cecilia Marmion, to take Mother M. Gertrude Blake to Pittsburgh, U. S., and Mother M. Vincent Egan became mother-superior October 19, 1845. In April, 1846, the first stone of a new convent was laid by Very Rev. Father Spain. The new mother-superior had a most severe attack of spinal disease, and was compelled to go to Dublin for treatment; she returned, quite restored, at Easter, 1846.

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 1847, the community entered the new convent, an elegant Pugin structure, built in the form of a hollow square, with cloisters, by the great architect himself. The next year, May 10, a grievous affliction befell the Sisters in the death, by malignant feyer, of their good father, founder, and guardian, Very Rev. John Spain.—R.I.P. As all vestiges of the ancient schism had disappeared, and as the feelings once so inflamed against his lordship had long since been calmed, Dr. Kennedy concluded to assume charge of the vacant parish and reside in Birr. "Though we had endured many

privations," writes the annalist, "from poverty and sickness, we had, nevertheless, led happy, contented lives, striving to serve God by performing as well as we could the duties of our holy state ; but now our dear Lord saw fit to send us new and different trials."

These were a direct consequence of the residence of the bishop in Birr. For a year and a half, probably through some misunderstanding, his lordship deprived the community of the privileges it had heretofore enjoyed, and, in a manner, signed its death-warrant by forbidding the mother superior to receive subjects. At length it was necessary to invoke the intervention of Archbishop Murray, through whose reasoning and influence Bishop Kennedy finally allowed the Sisters to resume all their duties and privileges, acknowledging that he had been mistaken as to their Rule and Constitutions. Although this prelate was a holy and mortified man, it can scarcely be doubted that he had a special talent for making difficulties where there need not have been any, and several features of the present affair recalled the first dawning of the unhappy disagreements of an earlier date. But the Sisters bore the anxieties of this most painful crisis with meekness and patience, trusting that the good God who had heretofore so visibly blessed and protected them would, in His own good time, come powerfully to their aid. The health of Dr. Kennedy became very precarious towards the end of 1849. He lingered till November, 1850, nursed and tended by the Sisters of Mercy with unceasing care and tenderness ; and as his soul was about to depart from a long and weary pilgrimage his last intelligible words besought the God of mercy to shower "abundant benedictions," in time and eternity, on the devoted spiritual daughters who had done so much to soothe his anguish and smooth his heavenward course, and so generously overlooked the pain, trouble, and anxiety he had, no doubt unwittingly, given them.—R.I.P.

His successor, Dr. Vaughan, made arrangements for building the south wing of the convent, comprising the chapel and schools. In 1854, at his lordship's request, a branch house was opened at Nenagh, and in 1855 another at Kilmurry. "As we had suffered so much from want of a settled provision," writes the annalist, "our dear mother made every arrangement for furnishing the convent and for the support of the five Sisters who formed the foundation."

In 1856 the last wing of the convent was completed, thus forming a complete square. This, the west side, comprises the sitting-rooms of the community, with two additional school-rooms, a turret staircase, and a bell-tower. The whole structure is exceedingly graceful and ornate, and is one of the most beautiful ornaments of a very pretty rural town.

In May, the same year, 1856, Mother Mary Vincent Egan, who had been superior since 1845, was re-elected by dispensation. In November the parish priest of Ballyjamesduff applied for Sisters, and Mother M. Vincent, who went thither to examine the necessities and resources of the place, decided that, for the present, it would be impracticable to found a convent there in the manner in which it should be founded. As the weather was unusually severe, the good mother contracted a cold which fastened upon her lungs and left her in declining health for the remainder of her life. Yet she was elected again, also by dispensation, in 1859. Though it was evident that she was gradually declining, the Sisters hoped that this most dearly loved mother would be spared in answer to their fervent prayers. But the good God chose to call her to Himself, after a life of pain, trial, and contradictions, meekly and lovingly borne for His sake and in His service. On the 20th of December she burst a blood-vessel, and after a week's agony, which nothing could alleviate, as it was caused by suffocation, she died on the 27th of December,

the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, 1860. This had always been a day of great devotion with the holy mother as the anniversary of the foundation of the convent and of her first interview with the holy foundress, to whom she had poured out all her joys and griefs, her hopes and fears, in connection with the blessed vocation she felt stirring within her. Mother McAuley had the highest esteem for this dear Sister; she herself read and explained the Rule to her, feeling that she was destined to become one of the most efficient superiors in the Institute, a worthy successor of the "most angelic Sister M. Aloysius Scott," upon whose improvement in health the foundress relied very little.

In May, 1841, the foundress paid her last visit to Birr, chiefly for the purpose of instructing and preparing Susan Egan to become Sister M. Vincent. "She is worth all the trouble we can take for her," wrote the foundress, and every day's experience proved the correctness of her estimate of this favored soul. Her moderate, and even saintly, attitude during the anxious period of the bishop's causeless opposition to her Institute, and unaccountable misunderstanding of its real aims and privileges, showed extraordinary administrative ability and a virtue akin to that of great saints. This eminently holy religious governed the Birr community and its branches from October 19, 1845, to December 27, 1860. Had the administration been confided to one less gifted or less saintly during this critical epoch it is probable that the Institute would have been obliged to succumb, considering the high quarter from which its chief trials proceeded.

Mother Mary Vincent Egan was laid beside her beloved Mother M. Aloysius Scott, on the 29th of December, amid the prayers and tears of bishop, clergy, and people. A personal friend of hers, J. Butler, Esq., Head Inspector of Schools, who attended her funeral, when returning from the cemetery fell dead in the cloisters—an alarming event that increased the gloom which the death of this beloved mother

had cast over the whole surrounding country. The election which her lamented loss made necessary was held the same day, Bishop Flannery presiding. Sister Mary à Beckett, who had been assistant to Mother M. Vincent for the fifteen years of her wise and holy administration, was chosen to succeed her. This good mother had entered in Baggot Street, 1840, for the English mission, from Birmingham, as has been already mentioned, but she chose to devote herself to the conversion of the quasi-schismatics of Birr, for whom she renounced the hope of laboring in her own country—a hope most dear to her heart.

Mother McAuley mentioned the extraordinary accomplishments of this lady in a letter to Carlow, adding: "It is very animating to see six young persons most happily circumstanced leave their friends and country to enter on a mission so contrary to natural inclinations; but the fire which Christ came to cast upon earth is kindling very fast." It is not a little singular that this good mother became superioress on the Feast of St. Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, said to be her collateral ancestor, as she traced her descent from that saint's family, though not always a Catholic.

The community continued to make rapid progress under this accomplished guide. In 1865 she was invited by Dr. Ullathorne to make a foundation at Stourbridge, Worcestershire, and, with the consent of Dr. Nicholas Power, Bishop of Killaloe, she went thither in July to make conclusive arrangements. A nice convent was in course of erection, and a postulant returned with the mother-superior and her companion to make her novitiate at St. John's; but, not finding the conditions proposed suitable to the requirements of the Order, the Sisters relinquished the project.

On the 6th of October, 1869, the mother-superior's silver jubilee occurred, and was celebrated "with great spiritual and corporal rejoicings." The dear Sisters showed their affection in every possible way, and the good bishop him-

self, though preparing to leave for Rome in order to assist at the general council, came to St. John's to officiate on that auspicious occasion.

In July, 1870, a Certified Industrial School for twenty small boys was opened by the Sisters in a house outside the boundary-wall. In October the bishop returned from the council in a dying state. The Sisters felt privileged in being allowed to do everything possible to alleviate the sufferings and soothe the last hours of this dear and most valued father and bishop, who had ever been to them a devoted friend. He died March 18, 1871.—R.I.P.

In November, 1872, Mother M. Vincent Whitty came to Birr to beg aid for her distant convent at Brisbane, Australia. From those who volunteered to accompany her, one, Sister Mary Magdalen Rooney, was selected, and left Birr November 11, the thirty-first anniversary of the happy departure of the holy foundress, by whom Mother Whitty had been professed in July, 1841.

On the 19th of February, 1876, the community sustained a great loss by the death of a dear and valuable member, Mother M. Clare O'Brien. Her lungs had been affected for a year, but she was apparently in no danger, and had grown so strong that she was allowed to return to her charge as local superior of the Nenagh convent. She had no sooner arrived than a violent attack of hemorrhage of the lungs carried her off in less than ten minutes.—R.I.P.

In 1877 the Sisters remodelled the old convent for poor-scholars, not having sufficient accommodation for their pupils. New schools were also erected, and opened on the Feast of St. Joseph Calasanctius. They are remarkably airy and lofty, with fine views of the beautiful surrounding country from the windows. Four rooms of the old house, the house once blessed by the presence of the holy foundress, are left unchanged; they serve as an oratory for the Sisters engaged in the schools, and for sitting-rooms. The bishop kindly blessed the new school and celebrated Mass

in it for the children. In May, 1880, the Sisters added a new chancel and a side-chapel to their beautiful church, which is dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy of the Immaculate Conception.

In the spring of 1881 the Sisters of Mercy took charge of the workhouse hospitals at Birr and Nenagh, to the great delight of the poor neglected patients.

Since the foundation of the house, December 27, 1840, sixty-one Sisters have been professed at Birr, and eighteen, besides the "most angelic" Mother M. Aloysius Scott, sleep in the convent cemetery. The community now consists of thirty-seven professed members, five novices, and two postulants, and is still governed by Mother Anastasia Beckett, who has been mother-superior without intermission since the Feast of St. Thomas à Becket, 1860, the Holy See having, by special rescripts, made her eligible for the votes of the community on six different occasions.

Birr was the last house founded by Mother McAuley in Ireland, and, in one sense, it may be said to have been the dearest. It was certainly, under God, the occasion of preventing the insubordination of one unhappy man, and the miserable squabbles it occasioned, from culminating in what might have won the degrading distinction of being styled a schism in the ever-faithful Church of Ireland. Reverend mother may be said to have sacrificed her life for this house, or rather for the cause it represented. Incessantly did she labor to bring back the poor erring people to their legitimate pastors, visiting their sick, consoling their afflicted, caressing and instructing the little ones, through whom she hoped to reach their parents' hardened hearts—in a word, setting an example of zeal which her children nobly followed till every straying sheep was safe in the fold of the True Shepherd. "I would like to remain in Birr as one stationary," she wrote. "I should not fear begging my bread." But the poverty and labors of this anxious mission were too much for her failing strength, and she offered

her life for the conversion of the erring pastor and those of his poor sheep who had been utterly demoralizing Birr for so many years till *she* had come with her message of peace and love and mercy

Just before the holy foundress set out for Birr she wrote the following pleasant letter to Mother Elizabeth Moore :

“CONVENT, BAGGOT STREET,  
“December 20, 1840.

“MY DEAR SISTER MARY ELIZABETH: You must leave the well-known ‘Mrs. Moore’ once more before we part: I must tell you what others say and what I have already said, for my poor stock in trade is quite exhausted. I wrote to Mother Mary Anne, asking if she could let five go to sleep on Saturday, 26th, and could our devotions on Sunday, breakfast, visit to the new convent, etc., be over by twelve o’clock and [the party] be ready to start for Birr. I prayed her to answer ‘quickly, plainly, and briefly.’ She writes as follows: ‘*Cead mille failthe; good dry lodgings; entertainment for man and beast;\* coffee for teetotalers. Mass at eight o’clock; breakfast at quarter to nine; visit the new convent at ten; arrive in Birr at four P.M.; no fog till five.*’ Sister M. Aloysius heard this with great surprise [on account of the well-known seriousness of Mother Mary Anne]. She did not suppose there was so much life in that quarter; if she had not read it she would be certain it fell out of my poor head.

“As I must go through the rounds of writing called the ‘Foundation Circular,’ after having finished letters to Mother M. Clare in England and Sister M. Xavier, I really did not know what to say to my poor Sister M. de Sales, from whom I have two or three unanswered letters, when some lively sprite suggested the thought of *dancing* through it. I then wrote as follows; it has made them laugh here, and if it has the same effect on you I will think the time well spent in writing it over again: ‘My dear Sister M. de Sales, I have just thought that our passage through this sweet world is something like a dance. Right and left; you and I have crossed over, changed

\* It was understood that the party was to proceed to Birr in a chaise and a jaunting-car, so that it was necessary to provide for the beasts as well as for their mistresses.

places, etc., etc. Your set is finished for a little time, but I have to go through the long figure called Sir Roger de Coverley—too old, perhaps, for your memory. I shall have to courtesy and bow low in Birr; to change corners, leaving the one I am now in for another; take the hands of all who will present theirs, and end the figure by coming back to my own place. Next a *sea* saw dance to Liverpool, and a merry jig that has no stop to Birmingham, another to Bermondsey, where Sister M. Xavier, you, and I will join hands and dance the “Duval Trio” ;\* back on the same ground. We have one solid source of happiness amid all this tripping—we can keep our hearts fixed on God; neither change of motion nor of place can deprive us of this. And if He will vouchsafe to look towards us for one moment each day with complacency we shall get on joyfully to the end of our journey. Oh! let us implore Him to do this at this season of mercy and love.’ [Advent, 1840.]

“Now what shall I say to yourself, worn out as I am? You don’t require much. Your path is now strewn with flowers, for the bazaar and all the pretty dolls and toys will bring you back to the gayety and innocence of childhood, and when you see them changed into bread and broth and blankets your heart will rejoice, and your offering will, I trust, be rendered fully acceptable by the pure love which produces it. May God grant you every blessing! I will write to you from Birr. My best love to my dear Sister M. Vincent and each dear Sister. Will you offer my respectful remembrances to Rev. Mr. Brahan? Pray often for your affectionate  
M. C. McAULEY.”

\* The above shows how well the holy mother remembers the dances in vogue in the days of her youth, and she applies the figures very ingeniously to her circumstances in 1840.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### THE FOUNDATION AT KINSALE.

Mrs. Mary Anne Bourke—Her Brother, Father Justin—Kinsale—Mother Elizabeth heads a Colony—Arrival—First Cross—Enduring Sorrow for a good Pastor—The Famine Year—Industrial School—Foundation to Derby—To San Francisco—Providential Delay—Mission to the Crimea—Clonakilty—Cincinnati—Excellence of the Kinsale Schools—Cost—Official Reports—Death of the Kinsale Foundress—Sodalities.

WE shall now notice a few of the branches which issued from the houses established by the holy foundress, especially the earlier ones.

St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy, Kinsale, was the fifteenth house of the Institute in Ireland.

Before the death of the holy foundress Providence sent to St. Mary's, Limerick, as postulant, a pious, benevolent widow, Mrs. Bourke, who designed to endow a convent of Our Lady of Mercy at Kinsale, of which town her brother, Very Rev. Justin Foley McNamara, had been pastor for many years. The immense wealth which this lady assigned to promote God's work in this remote place was a trifling item when compared to her great piety and sterling virtue. When in the world she never feared to speak in public to any poor lost one whom she could not otherwise reach to induce her to return to God; nor would she heed the disapproving remarks made often to her brother by their mutual friends: "Do you know to whom I saw your sister speaking in the street the other day? Why, to a regular castaway." Everything externally repulsive to her refined mind was overlooked in her anxiety to bring back that soul

to repentance and peace. Protecting innocence and reclaiming sinners from vice were the objects of her devoted care. When she discovered in the schools any child whose home-training had been injurious or defective, she endeavored, with a peculiar tact, to counteract the evil in a kind, firm manner. Many will remember this fine gentlewoman of the old school with affection and esteem. Her brother, Father Justin, with the cordial approbation of Bishop Murphy, earnestly besought good Mother Elizabeth to give him a colony to help to evangelize the poor of Kinsale. And shortly after Mrs. Bourke's profession all arrangements were completed for the opening of the projected establishment, 1844.

Kinsale is a very ancient town, and was a place of some importance in Catholic times as the seat of a priory of Regular Canons and of a Carmelite friary. There is still a Carmelite monastery in Kinsale, at which four or five Carmelite fathers usually reside. The name *Kinsale* is derived from two Celtic words signifying *head* and *sea*, it being situated at the head of the harbor, contiguous to the well-known promontory called "The Old Head of Kinsale."

Early in April, 1844, four choir Sisters and one lay Sister, accompanied by Mother Elizabeth Moore and Sister M. de Sales Bridgman, set out for Kinsale, the party being escorted by Very Rev. Dean Cull and Father John Brahan, parish priest of St. Mary's, Limerick. On reaching Cork, the Sisters being guests at St. Mary's, Rutland Street, the bishop wished them to remain a few days, that he might introduce them to the different communities in his episcopal city. His lordship graciously accompanied them to the Sisters of Charity, Peacock Lane, the North and South Presentation convents, and the Ursuline convent, Blackrock, and in every case they were most courteously received.

On their arrival at Kinsale, Friday, April 19, 1844, they were inducted into their new home, a good private house

with a small piece of ground attached, all being fitted up with due regard to holy poverty, as they were to remain here until the completion of their new convent. The works of the Institute were begun as soon as possible under the direction of Mother Elizabeth, who remained for a month. The school-buildings were progressing rapidly when she left, and were quite finished on the anniversary of the Sisters' arrival, April 19, 1845. Meanwhile they taught some hours daily in the National School, which was but a few minutes' walk from the convent. On Sundays they taught the children and adults, who came in crowds from all quarters, for about two hours and a half after the last Mass, which began at noon. At the opening of the new schools seven hundred children were present.

Like all other Convents of Mercy, this was to be established on the cross. It pleased God to deprive it in its infancy of a holy and enlightened guide and director, the founder, Father Justin, who died at Gibraltar, December 31, 1845—a loss that seemed irreparable. God, in His wisdom and mercy, however, took charge Himself of the little flock, which now began to increase and multiply far beyond what could be expected in such a poor, remote district. The grief of the people for their beloved pastor was uncontrollable. They all put on mourning, even the school-children, to testify their love and sorrow for one whom they justly regarded as a good and loving father. For eighteen years he had been parish priest of Kinsale, and knew every man, woman, and child in his parish by name. When his remains were brought home their grief was renewed; their wailing pierced the convent walls and overwhelmed the inmates with reawakened sorrow for their great loss. It seemed as though Kinsale cou'd never recover the effects of this death; for weeks after the shops were closed: the people actually thought life would be unendurable without this beloved father.

The famine year was one of great suffering in the neigh-

borhood. Twice a day the nuns distributed food to the children, besides helping a large number of adults, and soup was given daily to all who applied at the convent dispensary. Assistance came from many quarters. The pastor, Rev. Dr. Denis Murphy, had friends in Rome, America, and England, who sent liberal alms for the famine-stricken. Father Mathew was a generous benefactor at this trying crisis; and large quantities of rice, maize, and biscuits were sent to the convent for distribution by the Society of Friends, popularly termed Quakers.

An industrial school was opened to help poor women and girls to support themselves, and to rescue them from the dangers of proselytism, with which the Sisters had everywhere to contend. In Kinsale zealous Protestants began at once to distribute tracts and *soup*, endeavoring to make *soupers* of the poor; but their efforts were utterly foiled by the untiring zeal and watchfulness of the pastor, Dr. Murphy. Several kinds of work, plain and ornamental, were introduced, among them muslin embroidery and point lace; and as Irish point soon became quite fashionable, orders were received from various places for this exquisite fabric. Many of the girls were able to help their poorer friends with the money earned in this way, while not a few used their earnings to pay their passage to America.

In 1848, during the famine fever, the Sisters gained admittance to the fever hospital through the kindness of the doctors; and during the cholera visitation in 1849 they got full charge of the hospitals, where they remained day and night until the plague ceased. From this time they had free admission to the workhouse and fever hospitals to instruct and console the afflicted inmates.

In 1849 Kinsale sent out its first filiation to Derby, England, at the request of Right Rev. Dr. Ullathorne, Bishop, and Rev. Thos. Ling, pastor of that town. After some years of trial Derby became a flourishing establishment, and

greatly aided the Kinsale house by disposing of quantities of the work done by the poor and providing situations for the young women of the House of Mercy. Dr. Ullathorne continued to be a kind father and friend to this community while he remained over it.

The next foundation, which left for San Francisco, September 8, 1854, consisted of five professed Sisters and three novices. Most Rev. Archbishop Alemany, who invited them, commissioned Father Hugh Gallagher to take charge of the party *en route* for the fair city of the West. As they were disappointed of getting berths in the vessel in which they intended to sail, they had to delay a fortnight in Liverpool. This proved a happy delay, for the vessel burned when near the end of her voyage. Something similar happened in regard to two Sisters who failed to secure berths in the ill-fated *Pacific*, 1856, and thus by a special providence saved their lives. The San Francisco Sisters, having made some stay with the Sisters of Mercy, New York, set out on another voyage far more dangerous and fatiguing than their trip across the Atlantic, and, having crossed Panama and sailed up the Pacific, arrived in sight of the Golden Gate on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the day of its definition, DECEMBER 8, 1854.

Soon after the return of Mother M. Frances Bridgman from seeing her children off for California she was invited by the reverend mother of St. Catherine's, Dublin, to take charge of the Sisters who volunteered their services—specially solicited by the War Office—to nurse the sick and wounded soldiers in the Eastern hospitals during the Crimean War. With the sanction of the bishop, the zealous mother consented, and, setting out for Dublin on the appropriate Feast of St. Raphael, the guide of travellers, October 24, 1854, she found all the volunteers awaiting her at the old parent house. The details of this extraordinary mission form one of the most interesting, edifying, and almost romantic episodes in the story of the Order. But on ac-

count of their great length, and also because the Sisters of Mercy, Bermondsey, sent out a contingent which reached the seat of war a little earlier than that escorted thither by the mother-superior of the Kinsale convent, we are obliged to reserve them for our second volume.

In 1855 a filiation was sent to Newry to the saintly Bishop Blake, Mother McAuley's best friend and benefactor, who then presided over the see of Dromore. We shall refer again to the Newry convent.

In 1856 a branch house was established at Clonakilty, in the diocese of Ross, by Very Rev. Morgan Madden, it being the first convent founded in that diocese since the Reformation. From Clonakilty branches were detailed to Kilmacthomas, County Waterford, 1857, and to the workhouse hospital in the city of Waterford more recently—all by special arrangement, as these places are not in the same diocese. A large industrial school is attached to the Clonakilty convent, which accommodates over one hundred children, who live on the premises.

The next colony left Kinsale in 1858 for Cincinnati under the care of Mrs. Peter, who was deputed by the archbishop of that city to make arrangements for the foundation. In order to spare the number necessary for Cincinnati the mother-superior of Kinsale was obliged to defer for an indefinite period the fulfilment of a promise made to Bishop Keane to establish another branch in his diocese (Ross), which, however, was sent in 1860.

In 1865 a house was founded at Doone, in the diocese of Cashel, the funds for which were supplied by Father Matthew Hickey, parish priest, who gave his house and extensive grounds for the new convent. Two of his nieces were members of the Kinsale community, one of whom was sent on the Doone foundation after her uncle's death—R.I.P.

In 1867 a colony was asked by Most Rev. Daniel McGettigan, Bishop of Raphoe, for Ballyshannon. His lordship met the Sisters at Baggot Street convent and con-

ducted them in triumph to their new home in the far North. In him they had the best of fathers and kindest of friends, and he still continues the same, although now residing at Armagh and, as St. Patrick's successor, burdened with the cares of the primatial see.

In 1869 Our Lady of Mercy's Industrial School was opened at Kinsale. The funds were partly contributed by Charles Kennedy, Esq., of Dublin, who gave five hundred pounds towards its erection. The number of children admitted since the opening is two hundred and fifty-three ; those dismissed and provided for, ninety-eight ; at present in the house, one hundred and fifty-five.

This school is not a reformatory ; none are admitted who have committed public crimes. Those only who are destitute and are not under proper guardianship are certified by the magistrate as eligible for admission to the Mother of Mercy's Home.

The schools of the Kinsale convent have from the first borne a distinguished reputation. "The best reading I ever heard was in the Kinsale convent ; it was good in every class, and might well be imitated in some of our best English schools."\* "The best reading is in general to be found in convent schools. It is more intelligent, because punctuation is better attended to. At the same time the superior taste of the teachers has kept it free from the droning monotony which is common in rural districts."†

"I cannot forbear giving a short account of the Kinsale convent," says another official report.‡ "The buildings are well situated in every respect, and the school-rooms lofty, well ventilated, lighted, and furnished, and patterns of neatness and order. Apparatus of all kinds is plentiful and good. In one of the school-rooms are glass cases containing geological and other specimens. . . . The su-

\* Royal Commission of Inquiry, Primary Education, Ireland, Report 1870, vol. ii. p. 132. Report of Thomas Harvey, Esq., Assistant Commissioner.

† *Ibid.* p. 461. Report of J. Percival Balmer, Esq., Assistant Commissioner.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 102. Report of W. Scott Coward, Esq., Assistant Commissioner.

perior takes charge of the infants of working-women during the day. There were beds in which they are put to sleep. There is a room in which girls who come late to school, and are too old to be classed with the others, are taught, the object being to give them as much instruction as will enable them to read their prayer-books and write fairly, but they are taught needlework carefully.

"I examined girls of every class and found them all soundly taught. I was particularly pleased with the infants, who were the best instructed I met anywhere. One or two of them recited poetry very prettily. Discipline was admirably maintained throughout every class. I saw a large number of girls writing, and their simultaneous obedience to the directions of the nun in charge was done with military precision. The eyes of the girls were fixed on their work ; they were minding their business, although a stranger was present. Organization seemed to be fully attended to.

"Plain and fancy work was very carefully taught, lace-making also ; but I was pleased to see that the majority were learning plain sewing. The girls of the fourth and fifth classes had each a little bag or case in which samples of work were kept, which were exhibited to me by each girl, who is subjected to a similar overhauling periodically by the mother-superior. Each girl had also a case in which she kept her exercise, account, and other books, all with the greatest neatness. . . . Details were so carefully attended to that one felt confident in the excellence of the whole.

"Original composition is regularly practised, and the girls have acquired a considerable facility in writing letters." \*

In the same official report, p. 302, James Laurie Stuart, Esq., says of convent schools in general :

"They are free from the blemishes of the ordinary National [public] school. The points of superiority—which is, after all, a proof of *culture* on the part of the managing staff—are : manners and discipline, organization, cleanliness,

\* From 1844 to 1876 the Kinsale Sisters have expended on school-buildings and the poor £38,880 6s. 2d., and on the industrial school (1869-76) £23,046 13s. 10d.—the equivalent of over three hundred thousand dollars.

ventilation, sprightliness, and cheerfulness. All branches of hand-work, such as sewing, drawing, penmanship, and particularly exercise-books, etc., are carried out on the most correct plan and with the most gratifying proficiency."

We will condense here from the "Ninth Report of the Inspectors of Reformatory and Industrial Schools in Ireland, by John Lentaigne, Esq.," an account of the industrial school at Kinsale, as schools of this kind are attached to most of the Convents of Mercy :

"This school is well situated on the rising ground over the town of Kinsale. The buildings are superior. Five acres of land are attached, which are utilized to the best advantage for the training of the children. The conduct is excellent; it is impossible to visit this school without being struck with the cheerful, happy appearance of the children, their orderly and steady conduct, as well as the spirit of industry which prevails.

"Character of instruction and progress of the pupils very satisfactory. Vocal music, drawing, and needlework very good. In no school in Ireland is the training of household servants more effectively carried on. . . . The children are taught baking, washing and ironing of fine linen, lace-work, needle and machine work, the making of vegetable soups, pies, puddings. Every girl is individually instructed in domestic duties, so as to render her capable of earning her bread and contributing to the order and comfort of her future home.

"An asylum where young women of good character are prepared for service is attached to the establishment, where girls who have completed their term may remain until suitable employment offers, and find a home when out of employment afterwards."

In the industrial school under the Sisters of Mercy, Loughrea, gilding and stencilling are done by the inmates, "showing," says the government inspector, "that the more refined tastes are cultivated." Over seventy per cent. of the industrial schools (girls') of Ireland are administered by the Sisters of Mercy. They also conduct several reformatories, among others that of Ballinasloe, of which the

official report says : " The great secret in the successful management of this institution is that the Sisters themselves manage the reformatory ; they sleep in the girls' dormitory, and never leave them day or night." Of the girls who have left this institution eighty-three per cent. have been thoroughly reformed, one died, a few are doubtful, but not one has been ever reconvicted of any crime—a most consoling record ; for " it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

We will close our account of this prosperous offshoot of the Limerick house in a few lines. Mother Mary Joseph Bourke, the foundress, departed to our Lord March 22, 1870, in the seventy-fourth year of her age and twenty-seventh of her religious profession, having borne sweetly and patiently the long and painful illnesses attendant on her advanced age. " If any one was ever thoroughly devoted to the interests of Jesus and the salvation of souls," writes her superior, " *she* was. The greater the spiritual need of those who came within her reach, the greater her affection and solicitude for them. Her love of the Church and of the Holy Father was a passion. Charity was her leading virtue. In her the community lost a holy, loving mother and a bright example of every virtue."—R.I.P.

A number of sodalities sprang into existence at different periods :

In 1844 : St. Joseph's, for elderly women.

In 1854 : Children of Mary.

In 1860 : St. Anne's, for former pupils who have become matrons.

In 1867 : St. Brigid's, for young women of the working class.

In 1867 : Angels of the Blessed Sacrament, for young children.

In 1867 : St. Aloysius', for the school-children.

In 1872 : St. Francis', for girls who have left school.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### THE KILLARNEY FOUNDATION, 1844.

Mr. and Mrs. Galwey—Munificent Benefactors—The sick Poor—“The holy Divines”—Typhus Epidemic—Orphanage—School in the Wood-shed—Many Deaths among the Nuns—The new Convent—The Kenmare Family—The slow Chaplain—Another Quadrangle—Lessons in Irish—Holy Death of a saintly Priest—Branch at Tralee—At Castletown Berehaven—Floods—Ludicrous Incidents—The Workhouse Hospital—Incidents—Abbeylea—Generosity of the People—Countess of Kenmare’s Industrial School—A swift Answer to Prayer—St. Joseph propitious—Infant School for Boys—County Hospital—Simplicity of the Rustics.

KILLARNEY, one of the most beautifully situated towns in the world, was among the earliest applicants for Sisters of Mercy after the decease of the holy foundress. Early in 1843 Most Rev. Dr. Egan, who, as Bishop of Kerry,\* held spiritual jurisdiction over this wild and picturesque region, begged Mother Elizabeth Moore to give him a few Sisters. His lordship was urged to this step partly by his own zeal and partly by the solicitations of a wealthy couple, Mr. and Mrs. Galwey, who were very desirous of having a Convent of Mercy in the town. As usual, it took a long time to complete arrangements and prepare pioneers for the good work, and it was not till October 1, 1844, that six Sisters of Mercy—four to remain—arrived in sight of the lakes to make a beginning. They

\* Properly speaking, there is no diocese of Kerry. Most Rev. Dr. Egan was correctly styled “Bishop of Ardfert and Aghadoe,” a title which Dr. Moriarty changed for “Kerry” to evade, it is said, the provisions of the “Ecclesiastical Titles Bill,” always a dead letter. The present most learned ruler of this ancient district, in which his ancestors once held sway, Most Rev. Daniel McCarthy, has resumed the former titles.

were most cordially received by Mrs. Galwey and the young ladies of her family, who conducted them through the house which Mr. Galwey had purchased for them and now made over to them, fully furnished, all at his sole expense. In the dining-room, which was to be their refectory, a sumptuous dinner was provided, and the Sisters, always trained to wait on themselves, were amused to find the butler and other servants of their hostess ready to wait on them—a service which, however, they, as poor people, gracefully declined. The thoughtfulness of Mrs. Galwey in providing for their comfort even to the minutest details was deeply appreciated by the Sisters, and made the Killarney foundation quite unlike most others. The Galwey family, collectively and individually, have always been among the best friends of the nuns, sparing nothing to provide for their wants and promote their interests.

The principal duty that devolved on the Sisters in the beginning was the visitation of the sick. The lanes and alleys teemed with poor people, all anxious to be visited in their sickness and wants by the Ladies of Mercy, as they styled the new nuns. Owing to the bounty of the Earl and Countess of Kenmare, and the generosity of the townspeople and many of the neighboring gentry, the Sisters were able to relieve numbers in their own homes and distribute bread and soup at the convent several times a week. For twenty years the above, with the instruction of adults of both sexes, were the principal duties; so that the number of visits paid to the sick poor varied from three to five hundred a month.

The workhouse and the fever hospital were also attended. It was, and probably still is, a rule at the former to enter the names of all visitors in a sort of *guest-book* kept for that purpose; and for a long time the authorities who inspected the *guest-book* at stated intervals were at a loss to know who the HOLY DIVINES were who so frequently sought admission to the cheerless abode of the

poor. It was under this sublime title that the keeper of the lodge or gatehouse had mentioned the new Sisters on the pages of the visitors' book !

The deaths of many parents in a typhus-fever epidemic made it necessary for the Sisters to open an orphanage, for which purpose they used a small new house in a yard adjoining the convent. The arrangements were of the most primitive description. For years the children were obliged to recite their simple lessons in the dormitory. A school was so badly needed for troops of extern children that the Sisters erected a wood-shed in the yard, and taught daily as many poor waifs as could be crowded into it.

Meanwhile many young and fervent souls were added to the community ; but for years it seemed as if each had come only to ensure an early translation to a heavenly home. In the first decade of its existence this convent lost eleven young, efficient members. So many continued to be attacked with consumption that the superior, Mother M. de Sales Bridgman, resolved to make an effort to build a new convent, knowing how inadequate to the wants of the community the present house was. The site, a most desirable one, was granted by the Earl of Kenmare, and the new convent was soon built at the expense of the community. It is a very handsome structure, in the Pugin style, on an elevation overlooking the town, and has an extensive lake and mountain view. The surrounding country is tastefully planted, and presents a pleasing variety of hill and dale ; in front of the convent is a sloping meadow, on the eastern side an extensive garden. From an elevated knoll may be seen the magnificent red sandstone manor of the Earl of Kenmare (one of the four Catholic earls of Ireland), built in the Elizabethan style. The Kenmare family have always adhered to the Catholic faith, and the gilt cross of their domestic chapel, glittering in the sun of a bright summer evening, reminds one of those

among their ancestors who were true to the cross in evil times.

The frequent deaths which robbed the community of its most valued members were its greatest affliction, and often made the Sisters think their house was very appropriately dedicated to the Holy Cross. For over two years no chaplain was appointed, and the going out to Mass every morning involved much inconvenience. At length the bishop kindly sent a priest for daily Mass, but, on the whole, this did not better things very much ; for the chaplain, Rev. J. Casey, who was universally admitted to be a great saint—in his own way—owned some of the eccentricities which great sanctity, or genius, or other unusual gifts might be supposed to account for or excuse, while they do not at all lessen the inconveniences which such oddities sometimes inflict on mortals of inferior calibre. Father Casey, though almost an octogenarian, led a very austere life. He always rose at about four in the morning, and was wont to present his venerable person at the convent gate long before the time appointed for Mass. Then he would spend a whole hour at the altar, so that the Sisters had ample leisure to indulge their piety ; but the children and servants complained that their devotion “gave out.” Add to this that he took a considerable time in proceeding from the sacristy to the altar, ascending the steps, etc. ; for he attached extraordinary importance to his going through all these preliminaries in a most imposing manner. One day the holy man undertook to explain to the sacristan the great benefits which he and the community mutually derived from the dignity and stateliness of his evolutions on these occasions. The young Sister listened with great deference, but, as he wanted her opinion, she could not avoid a mild suggestion as to the desirability of a slight increase of speed in his movements, on account of the children and servants. But *he* wasn’t going to have a woman teach him—not *he*, indeed ; he knew his own business. And if there was one

thing he knew better than another it was, he informed the poor crestfallen sacristan, how to march on and off the altar; for in his youth he had taken lessons from seven celebrated dancing-masters, and the combined results of their skill, exercised on so apt a pupil, would appear to the last in the imposing mien and stately steps he daily displayed before the irreverent and unappreciative gaze of a new and frivolous generation.

On one occasion, when Father Casey was going on a journey with the bishop, to the amazement of every one he finished his Mass in half an hour and omitted several of the preparatory steps. Some time after he was speaking of the importance of slow, deliberate, and dignified movements, when one of the mothers somewhat indiscreetly, perhaps, remarked: "Suppose, father, you could every morning imagine yourself under orders to go to Dingle with the bishop, you might say Mass in half an hour, as you did on that eventful morning." But the good old man did not thank her for reminding him of a haste which he now regretted as irreverent, and he said with considerable warmth: "No, no, madame; I have no notion of making a fox-hunter's jig of the Mass."

Every morning Father Casey breakfasted at the convent, and the Sisters who waited on him, perceiving that he ate heartily only of a particular kind of cake, always contrived to have it freshly baked for him. Sometimes he would merely taste it—no doubt out of mortification—and when his hostess took the liberty of pressing him to eat a little more—he was so old and feeble—he would say: "No more to-day, child; but to-morrow, please God, I'll eat another quadrangle."

This zealous old priest took great delight in teaching the Sisters the Irish catechism, in which most useful branch of knowledge he gave them a thorough drilling every Sunday morning. Many of their poor could understand instruction only in Irish, and as Father Casey was a distinguished Irish

scholar his aid in this respect was of great service to the nuns.

This holy man used constantly to pray that God Almighty might take him to Himself rather than deprive him of the happiness of saying his daily Mass; and his life-long prayer was granted. A paralytic stroke quickly released him from his exile by a death which was but the echo of his life, holy and peaceful. The Franciscan Recollects supplied his place in the Sisters' regard, and still continue chaplains to the Killarney Convent of Our Lady of Mercy.

In 1854 Most Rev. Dr. Moriarty, Coadjutor-Bishop of Kerry, and Very Rev. Dean Mawe, parish priest of Tralee, invited the Killarney Sisters to establish a convent at Tralee, about twenty miles from Killarney. The new house was opened during the Octave of the Assumption, August 16, 1854, and the orphans were transferred thither a little later. We shall return to the Tralee house.

In 1864 a convent was founded at Castletown Berehaven at the request of the zealous pastor, Very Rev. Michael Enright. A house, garden, and schools were presented to the Sisters by Mrs. O'Geran, Rushmount House, and six Sisters went thither during the Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, September 10, 1864. The people, though simple, are very intelligent, and showed a full appreciation of the advantages afforded them. The Sunday-schools were crowded with adults, and the children were most regular in their attendance on week-days, and took pains to profit by the Sisters' teaching. Besides English they are taught music, drawing, etc., and, being blessed with fine talents, the progress they make is very apparent. It has been remarked that the girls educated at the Castletown schools are as finished as those of first-class boarding-schools. The people contributed liberally for the erection of a nice little convent and commodious schools, the principal benefactor being Thomas Leahy, Esq., South Mall, Cork, a near relative of Miss Barbara Anne Goold, whom

we have already mentioned. The Earl of Bantry gave a desirable site close to the parish church, on elevated ground commanding a near view of the bay, in which steamers are constantly plying and the British fleet sometimes lies at anchor. The adjacent country is exceedingly wild and beautiful, abounding in rocks and cascades, and dotted with picturesque ruins.

The removal of the Sisters to the new convent was an occasion of great jubilee, for the proximity of the old house to the sea, though pleasant in summer, was rather inconvenient in winter, as the tide occasionally made its way into the lower apartments. Its first visit was a memorable one. It was the feast of the mother-superior's patron, January 29. In the morning the good lay Sister who attended to the creature comforts, having made her visit to the chapel, proceeded to the kitchen, and was panic-stricken to find the dainties prepared for reverend mother's feast-day floating on the waves. Her first impulse was to jump in and save the products of the previous day's labor; but her efforts were unavailing, and, to add to her misery, she emerged from the destroying element *minus* a shoe—a catastrophe which put the finishing stroke to her cross for that day. Another time, as the Sisters were at dinner, the tide suddenly rushed in and surrounded them. This was a signal for fun for the novices; all had to take refuge, first upon the seats, then upon the table, and finally to form a bridge of stools, upon which they escaped to more elevated regions.

The Killarney house, not weakened by its numerous filiations, continued to flourish, like the other convents of the Order, under the protecting shadow of the cross. The workhouse hospital was its next extension. The Poor-Law Guardians applied for Sisters to take care of the sick, and built and furnished a nice little convent for them, in which six Sisters established themselves on the eve of All Saints, 1867. The hospital soon underwent a complete change, and the patients were much consoled by the atten-

tions of the nuns, who overlooked culinary affairs and gave them their meals comfortably—a new experience to the desolate creatures.\* A poor paralyzed woman, whom a Sister fed several times every day, occasionally during the process made the following ejaculations : “ Glory be to God ! You’re the finest cook I ever met—small bits and plenty of time.”

The hospitals are airy and cheery, the walls colored, floors stained, iron bedsteads, and white quilts. In each ward there is a large crucifix. In fact, no matter what the Sisters ask for the hospitals, the guardians never refuse their requests. At first there was great difficulty in accustoming the wardswomen to keep the wards tidy, and it was a mystery to them why the quilts should be kept straight. A wardswoman who had learned her lesson was heard saying to the patients : “ Ye are all to lie still there, now, like so many alyblasthers,† and don’t be upsettin’ yer quilts.”

The workhouse chapel is very nicely arranged. There is a neat altar, the niches are filled with statues, and stained-glass windows give the whole a fresh, bright appearance.

\* A recent official report says : “ Though acquainted with many such hospitals, we have never seen anything so complete, perfect, and satisfactory as the arrangement of the different details as carried out in the Killarney hospital under the able management of the Sisters of Mercy and the skilful supervision of the medical officer. The services of these nuns are invaluable, and superior to anything that could be expected from ordinary nurses ; their great intelligence renders them very efficient assistants in carrying out the views and instructions of the medical officers.” Canon Griffin, arguing in favor of the introduction of the nuns to the Millstreet Union, Cork, says : “ Unskilled nurses, as a matter of economy, should never be appointed, especially where contagious diseases are treated. I have been informed by the medical officer of the Killarney hospital that out of 427 patients treated within a year there were only fifteen deaths, and some of these people had entered in the last stage of the fever, and were consequently incurable. During the past four years 1,621 patients entered, and out of these only sixty deaths. The doctors attribute this very small mortality entirely to the judicious nurse-tending, adding that any amount of medical skill without such valuable assistance could not have produced such favorable results. . . . As to the moral effect produced by the presence of the Sisters of Mercy, and the spiritual comfort they afford to the sick and dying, no one can estimate it unless those who have watched their work.”

† Alabaster—a rude kind of doll seen among the peasant children.

The Sisters' little choir is divided from the chapel by a grating. Benediction is given on Sundays and feasts, and daily during May and other seasons of special devotion ; the poor inmates take great delight in the organ and the singing. The hospital is dedicated to St. Elizabeth of Hungary, who was so compassionate to the sick poor.

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 1870, six Sisters of Mercy from Killarney opened a branch of their Institute at Abbeyfeale at the request of Most Rev. George Butler, Bishop of Limerick, who had applied to his great friend, Bishop Moriarty, for a colony, as there was not at that time a single Sister to spare in the Limerick house. The generosity of priests and people in this ancient and once monastic town is something exceptional. The Sisters rarely purchase anything for their own use ; the pantry is always supplied with all sorts of good things. Nor has this liberality lessened at any time during the eleven years the house has been established. Immediately after the arrival of the Sisters Sunday-schools and day-schools were opened, and so numerous did the attendance become that application was made for more laborers for the vineyard. Very Rev. Dr. Coughlan has been indefatigable in his efforts to promote the interests of the Sisters ; and a fine new convent and spacious schools are gratifying memorials of the zeal he exercises in their behalf.

The Countess of Kenmare\* committed to the Sisters of Mercy an industrial school which owed its existence to her active charity. Her ladyship, who formed the project of a house for the training of servants, took the old convent at a yearly rent, and fitted it up at an expense of one thousand pounds. She then admitted twenty-five girls, whom she placed under a matron until she could procure Sisters. As the number could be considerably increased if there were

\* Gertrude, daughter of Lord Charles Thynne, became Countess of Kenmare in 1871, but the benefactions of this benevolent lady to the Killarney convent had begun while she was Viscountess Castlerosse, previous to the death of her father-in-law.

suitable accommodation, reverend mother thought it a pity not to build, but had no funds with which to begin. St. Joseph was appealed to, as the girls' home was dedicated to him. The saint granted the prayer in the very form in which it was made—viz. : “Send a charitable person who will give us money for this purpose.” A gentleman who was never before at the convent called and asked for reverend mother ; on her appearing in the parlor he said : “ Do you not wish to build an industrial school ? Well, begin, and I will help you.” The bishop at once procured a plan, and a fine large house was erected at the eastern side of the convent, with which it is connected by a cloister. The generous benefactor whom St. Joseph sent never lost sight of the project until the house was finished, nearly all at his expense, and his purse was again opened to contribute towards the furnishing. When the walls were sufficiently dry Lady Kenmare's protégées were transferred to the new St. Joseph's. Her ladyship continued to take a lively interest in these girls, and when they had increased to eighty she often invited them to an afternoon feast on the demesne, and on these occasions her children, Lady Margaret and the Hon. Cecil Browne, came out among the poor girls and promoted their amusements, waiting on them and disporting with them on the beautiful lawns of Killarney House. Many of the grown girls have been taken into her ladyship's household, and, when sufficiently trained, have been provided with good situations.

An infant boys' school was the next good work inaugurated ; it was followed, November 21, 1872, by the county hospital, of which the Sisters assumed charge at the request of the attending physicians. All the improvements they suggested were carried out by Dr. Griffin, the resident physician, whose kindness renders comparatively easy all the difficulties to be encountered. All sorts of contagious diseases are admitted. Many lives are saved by kind, judicious nursing. But the hospital is otherwise a great field

for zeal: numbers of young people who come in from remote districts are found to be ignorant of the fundamental truths of our holy religion. During convalescence they are thoroughly instructed, and leave with soul as well as body improved by the visit.

The simplicity of some of these poor rustics is often amusing. A woman once said to a Sister: "I don't know whether to call ye *sir* or *madam*, for I can't tell whether ye'er the friars or the nuns."

The Sisters live in a very nice convent built on the hospital grounds, not far from the boys' industrial school. Upon the completion of St. Joseph's a spacious day-school for girls was built within the enclosure; the kind benefactor who contributed so largely to St. Joseph's again remembered the poor little ones of Jesus Christ and aided the good work with unwonted liberality.

Nothing was now wanting to the efficient discharge of all the duties of the Institute save a House of Mercy, and when the need of such an establishment was mentioned to the bishop, Most Rev. Daniel McCarthy, his lordship, always a faithful friend and generous benefactor, gave a hundred pounds as his first contribution for so desirable an institution. Before these particulars appear in print the House of Mercy will probably have been in successful operation—an issue for which many devout prayers daily ascend to heaven. The community at the Killarney convent numbers fifty-two at present.

We may conclude this sketch of the Killarney convent with a condensed extract from *Memorandums in Ireland* :\*

"Among the scholastic establishments of Killarney is the convent of the Sisters of Mercy, which contains a great deal of zealous, active piety and much genuine philanthropy. I found the Sisters variously employed: one at the piano instructing in music a band of orphan girls maintained by them; another superintending an industrial school

\* By Sir John Forbes, M.D., F.R.S., Physician to her Majesty's Household.

for servants out of place, to whom they afford a home as well as instruction. These and such like are the indoor works of the Sisters ; but they also visit and nurse the sick —an office, I was told by a medical gentleman of the place, which they fulfil with the utmost devotion in all its painful and disagreeable details. There was a singular air of calm and solemnity in this house, and the Sisters, though looking cheerful as busy people generally do, had something in their bearing which inspired at once reverence and awe.

“These noble Sisters of Mercy are so widely spread over Ireland, and so constantly to be found where good is to be done, that I feel it would be unjust alike to their profession and practice (which here for once are the same) not to make them the express subjects of a few memorandums in a book professedly treating of Ireland.

“Every one [in Ireland] . . . must have seen these Sisters at their various works of charity and mercy—educating the young, nursing the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, harboring the homeless, imparting religion to improve the good and restore the bad ; and all with that utter self-abnegation and self-devotion, and with that earnestness, tenderness, and patience, which can only spring from the profoundest conviction that in so laboring they are fulfilling God’s will as revealed to man.

“Of them . . . it may be said that they follow to the letter the precepts and practice of the great Founder of the Christian religion by actively ministering to the welfare of their fellow-creatures in accordance with that grand fundamental law—to do unto others as one would desire that others should do unto him.”

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### THE TRALEE FOUNDATION, 1854.

Benefactors—Foundresses—Prison Experiences—Anecdote—Origin of the Magdalen Asylum of Tralee—J. Mulchinock, Esq., a most munificent Benefactor—The new Convent—Last Resting-place of Mr. Mulchinock near the Convent Sanctuary—A dutiful Heir—A Bread-Riot imminent—Averted by a charitable Priest—Sisters for Australia—Very Rev. Dean Mawe—New Branch—The Workhouse Hospital—Ludicrous Incidents—More Aid given to Australia.

THE people of Tralee had long been anxious for the establishment of a convent of Our Lady of Mercy, and Providence, in response to this earnest desire of their hearts, inspired a generous Catholic lady, Mrs. Mary Anne Coppinger, a native of Kerry, then residing in Dublin, to contribute largely towards the foundation; and a saintly young gentleman of Tralee, Thomas Pembroke, Esq., made it his dying request to his uncle, John Mulchinock, Esq., to have his means expended in carrying out this project. His wishes were more than realized, for his good uncle became a firm supporter and most generous benefactor of the Tralee convent, for the site of which he purchased and presented to the mother-superior sixteen acres of land. In July, 1854, Mother de Sales Bridgman and Mother Elizabeth O'Reardon came from Killarney, accompanied by Dr. Moriarty Bishop of Kerry. They were joyfully received by clergy and people, and warmly welcomed by the good Presentation nuns, with whom they stopped. On the Feast of St. Bonaventure they took possession of a suitable house in Day Place, which was rented for them by P. Jeffers,

E-q., and furnished by the towns-people. After the August retreat three Sisters came from Killarney to share the labors of this extensive field. A House of Mercy and orphanage were opened immediately, an industrial school and a poor-school followed, and the Sisters undertook the visitation of the prisons. On one of their earliest visits they asked to be introduced to a desperate character under sentence of transportation for life, who was chained in his cell, as it was not deemed safe to leave him at large. The guards offered to accompany them, but they declined this service. The prisoner eyed them fiercely and replied to their queries with abruptness ; but, nothing daunted, they offered a fervent petition to his Father in heaven, who alone can touch the hearts of His children and move them to repentance. At length they succeeded in touching the right chord : soon the proud, strong man was sobbing like a child. Before he left the prison he received the sacraments most devoutly, and offered the penal servitude he was about to undergo in atonement for his past crimes. Several others of the same stamp, through the mercy of God, were likewise reclaimed.

Amusing incidents sometimes happened within these grim walls. One rather odd looking gentleman, who was a regular boarder at the prison, told the Sisters one day that his last term of detention had almost expired, and that he hoped, with the help of God and their prayers, they would never find him in these quarters again. At the next visit they missed the familiar face, and were beginning to entertain strong hopes of his perseverance, which, unfortunately, his presence in the old place on the following Sunday dispelled. Though quite crestfallen, and even sorry, for disappointing their confidence, he endeavored to make the best of the situation, and when the senior Sister expressed some surprise at meeting him so soon again he said very good-humoredly : " Yer surprise ought to be that I stopped away from ye so long."

In the first year of the Sisters' residence in Tralee a mission was given by the Dominican fathers, and an event in connection with it, apparently ordinary, shows how wonderfully and simply God works to bring about the execution of His great designs. The sight of a number of children on their way to the church to make their First Communion so affected a poor outcast that she was powerless to move. As she gazed through the iron railings of the churchyard at the happy group thoughts to which, alas! she had been long a stranger rose up within her; she remembered the day of her own First Communion, the innocence and happiness she could then claim, and, after contrasting that time with the wretched present and reflecting on God's mercy towards the sinner, she resolved, as she had imitated the prodigal in his crimes, to imitate him in his repentance, and lost no time in seeking reconciliation with God through His minister, who sent her to the Sisters for instruction and safe-keeping. Such was the origin of the Magdalen Asylum in Tralee, till then never contemplated, but which has been ever since a home of security and content to the many who have sought its shelter.

So many throughout the country followed the example of this true penitent that a house on Straw Road was rented for them by J. Mulchinock, Esq., who built them a fine, handsome retreat a few years later.

The foundation-stone of a splendid new convent was laid in May, 1855, by this great benefactor, who, when the few hundred; generously contributed by the people of Tralee were expended, completed the whole edifice at his own expense.

The convent, church, schools, and Magdalen Asylum form a grand pile in the Gothic ecclesiastical style, built of hammered limestone, with mullions, buttresses, and coignes, etc., of a lighter color very finely cut. The house is two stories high, with cloisters, three hundred feet long by nine wide, joining the main building to the other institutions.

The entire structure has been greatly admired, and critics have declared it a masterpiece. It was solemnly blessed on the 24th of June, 1858, and the Sisters came to reside in it on the Eve of the Visitation. On the Feast of the Visitation, July 2, Mass was celebrated in it for the first time, on which occasion two converts were received into the Church and baptized. Then a procession formed by all the school-children wound through the avenues and cloisters, with hymns and prayers of thanksgiving; hundreds of spectators joined in the devotions, which were concluded by solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

In September, 1863, the worthy benefactor of this house, J. Mulchinock, Esq., went to receive the reward of his charity. He is interred in the chantry, which lies to the right of the sanctuary, opposite the choir. Within the last few years that little spot has been made a gem of art through the taste and generosity of E. Mulchinock, Esq., Dublin, nephew and heir of the holy and charitable benefactor whose remains lie awaiting a glorious resurrection in the sacred soil beneath.—R.I.P.

In this year was completed a fine new orphanage called Nazareth, of which eighty orphans took possession on the Feast of St. Jerome Emilian, July 20. During a season of extreme distress, when no work was to be had and numbers were starving, the Sisters opened a soup-kitchen from which hundreds were relieved. "Sometimes when our supplies failed," writes a Sister, "we wished that the blessing of the prophet Elias on the poor widow's little provision might be extended to our stores and boilers in the soup-kitchen." Once such was the despair of the poor that they raised the black flag and marched through the streets, and might have broken into the provision stores and shops had not one of the priests interposed, bidding them take courage, for he would get something done for them. With the implicit confidence and respect for the

sacerdotal character peculiar to their race, they instantly lowered the flag and quietly dispersed. Next morning three hundred of them were employed in one of the convent fields, then only a mass of limestone rocks. Their kind reverend friend asked the nuns to give them something to eat, and soon this hungry army lined the cloisters, waiting to receive from the Sisters' hands the acceptable abundance to which they had been long strangers. This was repeated the two following mornings, but as their hire was given them on the third day they were able to provide for their own wants.

In 1871 Right Rev. Dr. Quinn, Lord Bishop of Brisbane, and Mother M. Vincent Whitty made an earnest appeal for subjects. Three were selected, one a professed Sister, from the volunteers, and all are now doing good work for God on that distant mission.

On the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel a branch was opened at the opposite end of the town. The house and a fine garden were gifts from Very Rev. Dean Mawe; but the work increased so rapidly that the teaching staff had to be augmented, and the house was not half large enough for the number which the duties required. The priests and the more influential Catholics formed themselves into a committee for the purpose of collecting and contributing funds towards the erection of a new convent, in which the Sisters have already taken up their abode. The pension-school has been transferred to the new branch, as the locality is more convenient for the class of children attending it.

The sodalities and confraternities established here have been very successful. The Sisters built a large poor-school, which is attended by three hundred poor boys, the waifs and strays of the town, who, if not admitted here, would not go to school anywhere. There is a corresponding school for girls, and breakfast is given every morning to two hundred and fifty of the most destitute children, whom the Sisters also clothe. From the date of their

establishment in Tralee the Sisters were most anxious to get charge of the workhouse hospital, for they could not behold with indifference the absence of temporal comfort, still less of the spiritual privileges needful for the sick and dying.

In November, 1874, the guardians, by an almost unanimous vote, decided to ask the Sisters to take charge of this neglected institution, which they gladly did on the 11th of November ; in memory of which date, the anniversary of the precious death of our beloved foundress, the convent and hospital were dedicated to St. Catherine.

The Sisters, seven in number, were received with the wildest delight by the poor, who in their simple, homely way greeted them : "Oh ! then, ye're heartily welcome." "Thank God we live to see the day ye came among us !" One poor woman, an afflicted child of Eve, blind and deaf, in some way became aware of their arrival ; and when a Sister went to speak to her she examined the religious dress with her hands, and, catching hold of the beads, cried out : "Oh ! the Blessed Virgin is with me ; thank God ! how happy I am." The Sister, wishing to undeceive her, desired a woman who stood near to tell her it was only one of the nuns. The interpreter, by way of explaining matters, said : "Machree, it isn't the Mother of God that's with ye at all, but much the same as her, glory, honor, and praise be to God !" The friends of a poor man who died in the hospital came to inquire if he had had the priest. "Musha, he had, then, and them that's next to the priest, glory to them !" was the reply.

The last good work of the Tralee community which we shall mention is that, despite all the calls made on them at home, they have not been unmindful of the foreign mission, but have generously helped their Australian Sisters a second time. In January, 1878, they sent to Brisbane three professed Sisters and two postulants, who, after a prosperous voyage of nine weeks, reached their distant home on the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### OTHER FOUNDATIONS.

Newry—Why not sooner established—Convent—Public Laundry—Death of the Mother-Superior—Progress—The holy Successor of Dr. Blake—Director of Mary of the Nation—Kilrush—Mission—How the Fruits of the Mission were to be preserved—Father Kelly's efforts to Establish a Convent—Mr. Matt Kelly—Mother M. Vincent Egan—Kilrush Convent—The Sisters requested to visit the Workhouse—Col. Vandeleur presents a Site for a Convent—The Structure goes up as if by Magic—Liberal Benefactors—Holy Death of Mother M. de Sales Denehy—Conversion of Dr. Eliot—The Stone Cross—Father Kelly at Rome—His edifying Death—His Character and Works—“When I was young I never lost Time”—Provides for an Orphanage—The Bell of St. Senanus—Death of Dr. McDonnell—Convent opened at Kilkee—Help from St. Joseph—Visit of the Lord-Lieutenant, etc.—Continued Kindness of Mr. Matt Kelly—Increase of the Community in Heaven—The Sisters assume charge of the Workhouse Hospital—Conversion and happy Death of a Benefactor, Randal Borough, Esq.—Deaths in the Community—Death of Father Spain—His singular Holiness—Very Rev. Dr. Carberry, O.P.

SPACE will not admit of our mentioning more than a few other houses, and these in a very cursory manner. The Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Newry, was founded on the 26th of June, 1855, and dedicated to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is of peculiar interest, as it was founded by Mother McAuley's life-long friend, director, and best benefactor, Most Rev. Michael Blake, who may in some sense be considered the founder of the Institute. Fifteen years before Mother McAuley had visited Newry at the request of this great and holy friend, who was wont to pray God to let him see her children in his diocese, if only a day, before his\* death. But in conse-

\* Dr. Blake was consecrated Bishop of Dromore on St. Patrick's day, March 17, 1833. On that very day a riot was made in Newry by the Orangemen, who sought to destroy everything Catholic in the town. The convent, subsequently visited by Mother McAuley, was seriously injured; the massive iron gate could not be forced, but the poor ignorant miscreants sent showers of stones through the front windows, which

quence of the great bigotry of the place—at that time a nest of Orangemen—it was deemed prudent to defer the proposed foundation, as it would have been impossible for the Sisters to fulfil that part of their duty that requires them to visit the sick, etc. ; their appearance in the streets as religious would have resulted in a riot. However, the prayers and tears of these two saintly souls, bound together in the Heart of Jesus by so many ties, bore fruit in due season.

Five Sisters from Kinsale formed the community. The first visitation of the sick took place appropriately on the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, July 2, 1855. The House of Mercy was opened soon after ; its first inmate was deaf and dumb. It is supported chiefly by a public laundry. Many girls are trained and sent out to service by the Sisters of this institution. A work-school was added to help respectable girls to earn their livelihood. Large numbers find employment in this school. The most beautiful plain and fancy work is executed by the girls, and orders are received from many places, including even Australia and New Zealand. An orphanage was established in 1858, and St. Joseph's Society for women attending Sunday-school a little later.

The community at Newry suffered a deep bereavement in 1860, when the pure soul of their holy bishop passed from earth. Bishop Blake was eighty-five years old. Though a most influential man in his day, and influential chiefly by his sanctity, he is now remembered principally for his connection with the holy foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. His whole time, talent, and energy were devoted to God, the Church, and the poor. Mother McAuley revered him as a saint, and taught her children to pray for him as their best benefactor. He is remembered yet in

were completely demolished. The nuns were most thankful to God that, though missiles were flying in all directions, not one touched the tabernacle, so the Blessed Sacrament was preserved from profanation.

Dublin by "St. Joseph's Asylum for Aged and Virtuous Single Females," which he founded, and which still flourishes. It is popularly called "The Old Maids' Convent."

The community at Newry increased so rapidly that it soon became necessary to build a new convent, which was done in 1862. Within the next two years the mother-superior and the mother-assistant were called to their rest: an almost irreparable loss to the rising Institute.—R.I.P.

In 1864 the Society of Children of Mary was established, the diploma of aggregation having been obtained from Rome. It now numbers over four hundred members. A little later a night-school was opened for the people who work in factories.

In June, 1864, a branch was planted in far-famed Rostrevor, a delightfully-situated watering-place. As no house in the village was suitable for a convent, the parish priest kindly gave up his own to the Sisters until their new home was built. They entered, on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, 1867, this miniature convent, which is attached to the parish church, the Sisters' choir being on a line with the sanctuary. In August, 1866, the Sisters went to Lurgan, where a fine convent and large schools awaited them.

In 1866 several new schools were placed under the direction of the Sisters of Mercy, Newry, and later an infant school for boys—an institution greatly needed.

Among other charitable works the Sisters of Mercy, Newry, opened, on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, September 24, 1879, at Kilmorey Street, OUR MOTHER OF MERCY'S HOME, for the aged poor and for destitute orphans, which already contains over fifty inmates. A generous benefactor gave a suitable house. This is the favorite institution of the holy successor of Dr. Blake, who writes:

*"May the Almighty bestow an abundant reward on the benefactors of this most charitable institution."*

" JOHN PIUS LEAHY, O.P.,

*"Bishop of Dromore."*

The coadjutor and successor of Bishop Blake, Most Rev. John Pius Leahy, O.P., continues to be the angel of the church of Dromore. He has been father, friend, benefactor—everything, in short—to the Newry community, which may well be regarded as specially blessed in having such a bishop. No one will revere this saintly prelate the less who remembers him as the director and generous friend of that “sweet violet of sanctity,” “Mary” of the Nation, in religion Sister Mary Alphonsus.

Father Kelly was appointed to the spiritual charge of Kilrush in 1848 by Most Rev. Dr. Kennedy, Lord Bishop of Killaloe. He found the majority of the people suffering from the terrible famine, and most strenuous attempts making, especially by the Presbyterians, to sap the faith of his people. Every such attempt was resolutely opposed by the good pastor and his zealous assistants, so that at the end of the famine not even one of the flock had been lost to the faith, and many outside the fold had become sincere converts.

No record of a mission at Kilrush existed for the previous three hundred years. Father Kelly, who was a vicar-general and a *D.D.*, but allowed his titles to remain in abeyance and was always called simply father, invited some Jesuits to give a mission for the spiritual comfort of his flock, as well as the strengthening of their faith. Accordingly a mission was opened by Rev. Robert Haly, S.J., Rev. W. Fortescue, S.J., and Rev. J. O'Dwyer, S.J., and continued for three weeks, ably conducted by these holy fathers, who were zealously assisted by Father Kelly, his curates, Fathers Moran and Pyne, and many of the clergy of the surrounding parishes. People came from all points of the compass to secure the privileges of this mission, which the Jesuit fathers declared to have been the most successful they had ever conducted.

At its close the pastors and missionaries took counsel as to what course should be followed to preserve its fruits;

and it was decided, besides erecting a mission cross in the chapel-yard, to establish a branch of the Sisters of Mercy to tend the sick, educate the children, and fit them to earn their bread. A meeting was called the following Sunday, Father Kelly in the chair ; and the above views having been forcibly placed before the assembly by Rev. Robert Haly, S.J., it was unanimously resolved (1) that the religious requirements of Kilrush imperatively demand the establishment of Sisters of Mercy in the town ; (2) that immediate steps be taken to found a Convent of Mercy amongst us for our own benefit and that of the people of the surrounding country ; and (3) that a subscription list be opened, which shall be carefully preserved in the convent as an enduring record of zeal for God's honor on the part of all who shall assist our good pastor in this glorious work of charity.

The meeting ended in the usual manner. It was resolved that "Father Kelly do leave the chair, and Dr. William Foley be called thereunto," and that "the marked and grateful thanks of the people of Kilrush be, and hereby are, conveyed to our beloved pastor for his dignified conduct in the chair, as well as for his uniform zeal for all things calculated to promote the honor and glory of God and the spiritual and temporal welfare of the flock committed to his care."

Next morning, bright and early, Father Kelly was at work. He headed the list with five hundred pounds, and then went among his parishioners, and in the afternoon had the pleasure of lodging in the bank the large sum of fifteen hundred pounds. In his rambles he had the happiness to find the fruits of the mission had spread far and wide, and that the people of the neighboring parishes were anxious to help him. His personal appeal to them next day was most affectionately received, and his zealous exertions soon resulted in a grand total of twenty-two hundred pounds.

Here we must not omit an act of great kindness on the part of Father Kelly's brother, Matt. Kelly, Esq., manager of the Kilrush branch of the National Bank, whose constant kindness to the Sisters is beyond all praise. This good gentleman placed the facts connected with the business before the directors in London, and the result was an order from the board to allow one-half per cent. interest, on all deposits connected with the building-fund, over the current rate.

The good pastor, knowing that years must pass before the new convent could be finished, determined that the foundation should be made in a temporary residence, and, with the approbation of Most Rev. Dr. Vaughan, communicated with Rev. Mother M. Vincent Egan, of Birr, requesting her to found a branch in this important town. The worthy Mother Egan entered most cordially into his views, and soon came with Mother M à Beckett to Kilrush, where they were guests of Dr. William and Mrs. Foley. Accompanied by Father Kelly and other friends, they visited several houses to select a suitable one for the temporary abode of the nuns. The only houses likely to answer their purpose were two in Francis Street, separated by a gateway. These the owner, a Protestant, offered at a rent of thirty-two pounds per annum on a lease with a clause of surrender. Mrs. Kennelly, who occupied a third of one with her large family, immediately offered to exchange her home for a house below the gateway, thus leaving the two houses, which could be united at a trifling expense, at the service of the Sisters—a very great act of kindness, most cheerfully done, on part of that accommodating lady.

On the first of May, 1855, six Sisters under the direction of Mother M. Vincent Egan came to Kilrush. They left Nenagh, escorted by Father Kelly and Father Scanlan, at two in the morning, reached Limerick at seven, had breakfast on board the steamer, and arrived at Kilrush just

in time for the noonday *Angelus*. They were met at the quay, about a mile from the town, by priests and people, who welcomed them with the most enthusiastic delight and led them processionally to their new home. On the 3d of May the convent was blessed and, on account of the feast, designated St. Mary's of the Cross.

The girls' poor-schools were in charge of a young lady, for whom Father Kelly provided another situation, as the Sisters immediately took charge of the children.

On the first of July, 1855, the first reception took place in the parish church, at the request of Father Kelly, for the gratification of the people. Sister M. Angela Spence received the holy habit, and Rev. J. O'Dwyer, S.J., preached on the occasion.

On the 20th of July the mother-superior received the following copy of resolutions adopted by the Poor-Law Guardians :

“Proposed by Francis Coffey, Esq., } Both Protestants.  
“Seconded by R. H. Borough, Esq., } Both Protestants.

“*Resolved*, That, feeling impressed with the idea of the beneficial results the pauper inmates of this union would derive from the visits of the Sisters of Mercy in carrying out their works of charity, we request that the wish of the board be conveyed through our clerk to the superioress of the convent, with a hope that she will acquiesce in carrying out the views of the guardians.”

The Sisters most gladly availed themselves of this invitation, and visited the poor-house every Sunday and holiday for the purpose of instructing the adults, and at other times for the children.

Years of silent work and prayer rolled on. On the 29th of July, 1859, Most Rev. Dr. Vaughan died. He was succeeded by Dr. Flannery. Both these prelates were most friendly to the Sisters.—R.I.P.

Early in 1860 Colonel Vandeleur, M.P., came to the

convent one day about ten A.M. with Father Kelly and Dr. Foley, and on the entrance of the mother-superior and the assistant, some preliminary conversation over, he said : "Ladies, the object of my visit at this early hour is to present a site for the new convent, and I have come prepared to leave the choice entirely to yourselves." He then pointed out three nice situations, and after a few moments' reflection all united in choosing the site on which the lovely convent now stands : a slight elevation commanding an interesting view of Kilrush and the Shannon, the holy island of Scattery, the splintered peaks of Kerry, and the hills and vales of the golden vein of Limerick. The site was granted, the building was begun, and on the 30th of March the Sisters removed to their new home, which had gone up as if by magic, but was still without a suitable chapel and schools.

Father Kelly gave a hundred pounds a year towards the building till his death ; many bequests and donations flowed in upon the Sisters. T. O'Gorman, Esq., left one hundred pounds ; Austin Fitzgerald, Esq., five hundred pounds ; Mrs. Lucinda Ryan, who loved the Sisters greatly, three hundred pounds ; Rev. J. Meade, a very dear friend, gave one hundred pounds ; P. O'Connor, Esq., one hundred pounds. And when it was proposed to build a convent at Kilkee other benefactors were inspired by God to aid the project : Rev. M. Short, P.P., Ballinahinch, left two hundred and fifty pounds, and several others various smaller sums.

In regard to the schools Father Kelly said : "My work is done ; the schools must be the work of my successor." To which his friend Dr. Foley replied : "Dear Father Kelly, your work will never be done while anything remains to be accomplished and the good God leaves you health and strength to do it." The above donations cheered his despondency, and the schools and chapel were speedily begun and finished.

On the 4th of April, 1866, the Kilrush convent supplied its first member to what the holy foundress was wont to call "the community in heaven." Mother de Sales Denely died a most edifying death. This holy religious was remarkable for her almost scrupulous exactness to religious discipline. Even in her last illness, despite her great weakness, she went through all the daily pious exercises until the mother-superior forbade her. In her agony she roused herself up, and, looking at her beloved mother, said : "Reverend mother, will you not tell me to die?" To which when the mother-superior replied, "Perhaps, my child, our time would not be God's time," she at once assented, and said sweetly : "Very well, dear mother." A beautiful smile played about her wasted features, and she sweetly fell asleep in our Lord in the forty-fourth year of her age and the twenty-third of her profession.—R.I.P.

The health of dear Father Kelly now began to decline, and he was compelled to try a change of air. In his absence the foundation-stone of a new school was laid by Rev. Mother M. Xavier Spain.

In January, 1867, Father Kelly and the Sisters were greatly consoled by the conversion and edifying death of Dr. Thomas Elliot, a Protestant, recently of the strongest prejudices against the Catholic religion.

As dispensary doctor of Kilrush his professional duties brought him into constant intercourse with the poor, and, witnessing the devoted attention of the Sisters to them, he often said to his Catholic friends : "No doubt there is something wonderful in your religion. It astonishes one to see ladies of high social position and refined education, such as your Sisters of Mercy, so devoted to the sick poor, and then to witness the calm, thorough resignation of these poor people to their hard lot, and the spirit of faith in which they leave this world. I see nothing like it in Protestantism."

A repetition of these edifying scenes fixed deeply in the

doctor's mind the conviction that the Catholic religion is the true religion. He was received into the Church in September, 1866, and died happily some months after.—R.I.P.

On the 11th of January, 1868, Father Kelly said Mass in the new schools, which were immediately crowded with children. When the building was finished a handsome stone cross was erected on the northern gable on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, and the architect, on descending from the scaffolding, said to the superior : "Mother, there is the CROSS, and there it will stand till the day of judgment, if the building lasts so long!"

Soon after an inspector visited the convent schools on the part of the Board of Education, expressed himself highly pleased with the proficiency of the children, but desired that the cross should be removed. A vigorous correspondence ensued between the board and the pastor, the former requiring that the cross should be taken down, the latter positively refusing to remove it. The priest triumphed—for the present. A year or so later the *crusade* was again renewed by the National Board, and for a twelvemonth they refused payment to the mistresses because the CROSS held its place. But sooner than remove that CROSS the Sisters were willing to sever their connection with the board, as others had done; so finally its officers wisely thought proper to say no more on the subject.

Father Kelly went to Rome about this time to pay his respects to the Holy Father, who honored him with a private audience. Observing the languid appearance of Father Kelly, whose health was visibly declining, His Holiness, placing his hand on his shoulder, said : "Cheer up, my son; you are young and have but a small district to look after; but look at me, an old man, with the weight of the whole Christian world pressing upon me." Good Father Kelly was greatly consoled by the kind reception accorded him by the saintly Pius IX., and, having satisfied his devotion in the Eternal City, returned to his cherished

lock, who had been longing for the time when they should see his dear face once more. But they did not long enjoy his visible presence ; on the 15th of March, 1869, he went to receive the reward of a most holy and zealous life. "It would be impossible," writes one of the nuns, "to describe Father Kelly ; all that could endear a pastor to his flock he possessed in the highest degree. Gentle and courteous, he never wounded the feelings of any one, while at the same time he could subdue the most obstinate disposition to obedience and love. The poor ever found in him a tender father, and never appealed to his charity in vain. To promote religion was his incessant care, in which he spared neither labor nor expense. He raised religious edifices likely to stand for ever as proofs of the pastor's zeal, the people's faith, and the progress of religion."

In his last illness he was greatly consoled by the visits of the Sisters whom he had loved so well ; and eloquently did he manifest the gratification he felt in every little service they rendered him. Sometimes he would say : " Go home now ; you have your little children to mind, and when I was young like you I never lost a moment of my time"—a speech that makes his panegyric and explains his extraordinary success as a "fisher of men." A few days before his death he handed mother superior a sketch of an orphanage which he once hoped to have been able to erect. Assisted by his brother, Mr. Matt. Kelly, he arranged all his affairs, and on the morning of his death he was not worth a penny.—R.I.P. He left forty shares in the National Bank, the dividends of which were to be applied solely to the support of orphans, feeling sure that with such a provision for their maintenance suitable accommodation would at once be provided by the Sisters, the priests, and the people. The Sisters have endeavored to carry out his wishes by supporting as many orphans as possible, inside and outside the convent, pending the erection of an orphanage.

In compliance with Father Kelly's desires and their own the Sisters opened a superior school for children of the upper classes, which has been very successful. A large bell, whose sweet tones are heard across the Shannon and remind thousands of the sacred hours of prayer and sacrifice, was placed in the convent belfry and blessed by Most Rev. Dr. Power, who dedicated it to St. Senanus, the patron of the parish.

On the 26th of April, 1871, the nuns lost a great friend by the death of Thomas B. O'Donnell, Esq., M.D., who for years had been their most kind and attentive physician, and would never accept of any remuneration save the prayers of his patients and their promise to be present at his death. On the eve of the day of his death the fervent convert said : "Reverend mother, will you stay with me till I die? This will be my last night." Mother-superior and a Sister remained with him all night and until late next day, when he expired, thus giving him the last coveted token of their sincere friendship and heartfelt gratitude.

On November 5, 1871, the Feast of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin, a convent was founded at Kilkee, eight miles distant. One of the best houses in the village was procured as a temporary residence at seventy pounds per annum. Here the nuns opened schools, which they placed under the protection of St. Philomena. The rent was high, and they prayed most fervently that God would help them with that and other difficulties. In March, 1872, they besought St. Joseph to come to their aid, the half-year's rent being due the following May; and on the eve of the Feast of St. Joseph they received from a gentleman in England, whose name they never learned, a check for thirty-five pounds ten shillings. Their unknown benefactor has died since—a fact they heard without mention of his name—and the Sisters never forgot him in their prayers.

On the 25th of May, 1872, his Excellency the Lord-Lieu-

tenant and Lady Spencer, attended by Colonel Wood and Captain Hatton, visited the convent, accompanied by several priests of the vicinity. One of the school-children read an appropriate address. The visit seemed to afford much pleasure to the viceregal party. Lord Francis and Lady Conyngham examined the working of the Institute a little later with great apparent interest.

The foundation stone of the Kilkee convent was laid on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, 1874, by Rev. M. Cleary, parish priest, in presence of an immense concourse. On the 8th of June, 1876, the Sisters went to reside in their new abode, the chapels and schools not being yet completed. A beautiful statue of the Sacred Heart, the generous gift of Mr. O'Neil, of Limerick, was enthroned on the pedestal over the front porch March 9, 1877.

The new chapel was solemnly opened July 20, 1877. The convent at Kilkee is beautifully situated on an eminence overlooking the bay. It is universally admired for its chaste elegance.

From the moment of his lamented brother's death Mr. Matt. Kelly has taken his position in the nuns' regard as far as any layman can do so, and every day they receive fresh proofs of his kindness. A very beautiful new altar, carved in Caen stone, was consecrated in the convent chapel by Most Rev. Dr. Ryan September 24, 1873. Father Kelly's successor, Very Rev. M. Dinan, gave one hundred pounds towards its erection.

Meanwhile "the community in heaven" continued to increase. Sister M. Benedicta O'Carroll passed away, after seven weeks' illness, on the first anniversary of her holy profession—a sweet young creature, ripe for heaven. Sister M. Catherine O'Grady, a most promising novice, followed. They were laid side by side in the beautiful little cemetery of the Holy Cross; the bishop and many clergy attended their obsequies.—R.I.P.

In October, 1875, at a meeting of the Poor-Law Guar-

dians it was unanimously resolved to request the services of the Sisters of Mercy for the workhouse hospital, fever hospital and infirmaries, and the poor lodged therein. The mother-superior was kindly requested to meet a few of the guardians at her earliest convenience, and suggest such changes in the residence portion of the building as were necessary for the Sisters' comfort.

Colonel Vandeleur, chairman of the board, having kindly carried out all her suggestions, the Sisters began their labor of love in the workhouse infirmaries, to the intense delight of the poor patients, May 6, 1876, placing all under the care and protection of the glorious St. Joseph. In March, 1877, the nuns had the great affliction of losing the friend who had been most instrumental in aiding them to alleviate the sad condition of the hapless inmates of the poor-house—Randal Borough, Esq. Though a Protestant, no Catholic could be more respectful or more anxious for the comfort of the Sisters. He spoke amongst his friends and acquaintances of the happiness it gave him to introduce the nuns to the hospital, because of the comfort it would bring the poor patients. Like all the Protestants in this section of the country who had specially befriended the Sisters, Almighty God was pleased to reward his charity with the precious gift of faith. He was received into the Church in his last illness, and died most happily some days later—R.I.P.—tenderly nursed by the nuns for whom he had done so much.

About the same time new additions were made to the community which the nuns were founding in heaven. A dear, zealous, hard-working lay Sister, gifted with good sense and piety, Sister Senanus Mulleney, died March 26, 1877, and a little after the community had to deplore the loss of Sister M. Alfonso Brady, who made her profession on her death-bed, April 8. The survivors look back with a holy joy on the edifying deaths of the dear Sisters who have left them. Death had no terrors for them; they

longed for the moment which would eternally unite them with their heavenly Spouse. One dear Sister on her death-bed promised to indemnify the community for her loss by sending postulants more than sufficient to supply her place, and shortly after four most efficient members entered the convent. "May not those whom they have left," writes the annalist, "hope, through the observance of the same holy Rule, to obtain the grace of all graces, a happy death?"

On the 1st of June, 1877, the Sisters lost a good friend in Rev. M. Spain, brother to their mother-superior and pastor of a neighboring parish, who was called to his reward after a life of singular holiness. A priest who knew him intimately wrote a letter to his sister descriptive of his death, from which we give an extract :

"The entire four months [of his illness] were spent almost exclusively in prayer and meditation. But during his whole priestly life he was accustomed to spend, including his Mass, preparation, and thanksgiving, *seven hours daily before the Blessed Sacrament*. This is rather under the mark than above it. Indeed, it is not in the power of any one to put on paper how he spent the last four months of his life ; it could be seen and admired, but hardly ever imitated.

"All who knew him affirm that never before did they witness any one so devoted to 'the one thing necessary.' Whilst living he was held fast bound, body and soul, in the arms of his God. No one alive knew him better than I, and on account of his great simplicity, singleness of purpose, and high sense of rectitude, I conclude—so far as human judgment could go—that he must have died a most holy death."

Whatever Father Spain had not already given away he left in charity, including fifty-five pounds, to the community.—R.I.P.

Another benefactor of Kilrush convent, with whom we shall close this sketch, is Very Rev. Dr. Carberry, O.P.,

*socius* of the general of the Dominicans. Among other acts of kindness he presented to the community a most valuable reliquary containing relics of all the saints of the year, and a beautiful oil-painting, *Madonna de Foligno di Raffaele*. This exquisite work of art is a souvenir of Italian oppression, being one of the spoils of a peaceful convent where it had held an honored place for centuries. For many years Father Carberry attended to the spiritual direction of the Kilrush nuns, who can never forget his fatherly kindness.

## CHAPTER L.

### OTHER FOUNDATIONS, CONTINUED.

Downpatrick, 1855—Dr. McAuley—Site of the Convent—A Princely Benefactor, Mr. McIllheron—Shrine of Patrick, Brigid, and Columb-Kill—The Heights of Mount St. Patrick—Death of Mother M. Borgia Fortune—Convent at Westport—Dean Burke—Archbishop MacHale—Assistance rendered to the Westport House in early Days—Sligo—Training-College—Enniskillen—Madame Jones—Father Daniel Jones, S.J.—Resigns Be-nada Abbey—Dean Boylan—A new Convent—Mother M. Ephrem Walsh—“Enniskillen Dragoons”—The Community in Heaven—“Predestined for Heaven”—Sister M. Paula Hogan—Sister M. Gertrude Mulcahy—Sister M. Teresa Harrison—She desires to become a lay Sister—Sister Dymphna—Clare and Agnes.

ON the Feast of St. Aloysius, June 21, 1855, St. Patrick's Convent of Mercy, Downpatrick, was founded as a branch from St. Paul's, Belfast, an affiliation from the parent house, 1854. Three Sisters took possession of the neat house which their revered father and friend, Dr. McAuley, had prepared for their reception. By an unforeseen circumstance it had happened that Very Rev. Dr. McAuley was the first priest who ever offered the Holy Sacrifice in the original choir of Baggot Street convent, Dublin, 1828—a circumstance which he often mentioned with considerable gratification.

The Downpatrick convent was erected on holy ground—the site of the gray old cloisters of the past. It had a devotional choir and fine schools, but, as the Sisters and pupils increased very rapidly, it soon became inadequate to the needs of the mission. A loving Providence watched over the sacred spot, however, and it was soon once

more covered with monastic buildings; a superb convent being erected chiefly by the munificent donation of one man—worthy to rank with the generous founders of old—Mr. McIlheron, of Downpatrick, who contributed five thousand pounds for this purpose. To its sunny cloisters the Sisters migrated from their temporary home November 1, 1873. The Convent of Our Lady of Mercy and St. Patrick's Memorial Church stand on a gentle eminence in the midst of picturesque scenery, bounded by the Mourne range and the lofty summit of Slieve Donard, and opposite the sacred hill on which St. Patrick erected his first church. A Protestant cathedral, which seems very much out of place, rises on the site of the ancient cathedral, close to the spot which tradition reveres as the triple shrine of Ireland's greatest saints :

“In Down three saints one grave do fill—  
Patrick, Brigid, and Columb-Kille.”

The above elegant structures, with spacious schools erected through the indefatigable zeal of Father O'Kane, crown the ecclesiastical heights of Mount St. Patrick. The pension-schools of Downpatrick and Belfast, as well as the poor-schools, bear a distinguished literary reputation. The community sustained a great loss, May 8, 1864, by the translation from their midst of their beloved mother-superior, Mary Borgia Fortune, who, after laboring zealously for many years in the service of the poor, sick, and ignorant, fell a victim to malignant typhus fever, caught in the discharge of her duty.—R.I.P.

#### WESTPORT.

In 1842 a convent of Our Lady of Mercy was founded in Westport from the Carlow house on the invitation of Most Rev. John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam, who appointed Dean Burke, a particular friend of the holy foundress

—to whom, it will be remembered, she wrote a few courteous lines from her death-bed—to negotiate the business. The foundation was composed of Mother M. Paula Cullen, Sister M. Gertrude O'Brien (who subsequently founded the Institute in Ballinrobe), and two others. Mother Frances Warde and a senior Sister accompanied them and remained until all was in good working order. For some time Mother Warde was accustomed to aid the young house by going to the ceremonies of reception and profession, and always in time for the preceding retreats, so as to give the usual instructions to the professed and novices-elect. Under such able superintendence the Westport convent made rapid progress, and in 1846 founded a house in Sligo, which has been signally successful and has among other useful institutions a training-college for teachers with one hundred and fifty lady students.

#### ENNISKILLEN.

One of the most important filiations of the Sligo house is the convent of Enniskillen, the nucleus of which was laid when the mother-superior, Madame Jones, conducted five zealous nuns to this ancient stronghold of Orangeism, May 27, 1856. Those acquainted with the history of this pretty town, so romantically situated on Lough Erne, will understand why the nuns who undertook to establish a convent within its boundaries required an unusual degree of the supernatural strength conferred by the gift of fortitude. The mother-superior, Mary Joseph Jones, belonged to a truly Levitical and saint-like family. Two of her sisters were members of Mother Aikenhead's community, and two of her brothers Jesuits, to say nothing of her more distant relatives.

Her eldest brother, Daniel Jones, heir of Benada Abbey, by the walls of which flows the beautiful Moy, whose name was "celebrated in bardic legends, and whose plentiful waters were blessed by Patrick, and Brigid, and Columb-

Kill, and Canice," had been urged by the Catholic Association to accept a seat in Parliament, but, by the counsel of his sister, he chose to enter the Jesuit novitiate instead. His name is sufficient to recall to the minds of the people of the west of Ireland "a religious remarkable alike for saintliness of life, greatness of learning, and unstudied gracefulness of manner."

Among other good deeds Father Jones restored his ancestral seat, Benada Abbey, to its original purposes, and the acceptance of it for a convent of her Order was the last official act of the illustrious and saintly Mother M. Augustine Aikenhead, who died the death of the just July 22, 1858.

The parish priest of Enniskillen, Dean Boylan, prepared for the reception of Mother M. J. Jones and her children a conveniently-situated house, to which he led them in triumph in presence of the hundreds that poured out to welcome them. But soon this residence and the schools were found to be in many ways unsuited to their objects. Situated on the very brink of Lough Erne, the rains of winter and spring often raised the waters to the height of the convent windows ; and as the consequent dampness was most injurious both to teachers and pupils, the good Mother Jones represented the state of things to the dean. The result of her representations is seen to-day in the fine convent now occupied by the Sisters of Mercy. But all this was not achieved without much trouble ; the former owners of the site, not being willing to allow it to be cumbered by a monastery, threatened several lawsuits for its recovery ; yet, by God's mercy, everything was amicably settled at last. On the return of the saintly Mother Jones to Sligo the Bishop of Clogher, Most Rev. Dr. McNally, appointed Mother M. Ephrem Walsh superior, and since that date (1859) she has governed the community, except for a short interval. My informant cannot forbear expressing "the sincere personal veneration with which he has always regarded

that noble lady, who, leaving home, family, and friends in the sunny South, came at God's bidding from Waterford to minister to the poor Catholics of the North, aided by the grace of God and the loving confidence of her spiritual children.

The Order of Mercy has been gradually making its power felt here, especially by rescuing the young female population from the dangers that surround it ; for Enniskillen, besides being thoroughly Protestant in tone, is also a military depot, and there are few who have not heard of the redoubtable "Enniskillen Dragoons." The nuns have extensive schools for the rich and the poor, and large sodalities which meet at stated times for instruction and devotions, and have many gala days given to innocent amusement as well as exercises of piety. A healthy Catholic spirit has gradually permeated Orange Enniskillen, and were some of the old inhabitants to revisit it, after many years' residence in the United States, they would be pleasantly astonished at the visible change, for which the people hourly give thanks to the good God.

The Enniskillen community has contributed its full quota to the "community in heaven." Sister M. Paula Hogan, who died October 5, 1863, was said by her confessor "to have been predestined for heaven." In humility and mortification she found all her happiness. So singularly devoted was she to the children under her charge that she never had a harsh word for the worst of them. Her very reproofs were meekness itself, but they proved far more effectual than severity could have been. On her death-bed she declared that she had been subject to almost every kind of temptation ; but the words of the great Master, "*My grace is sufficient for thee,*" were ever in her heart, and she passed through her trials with such increase of grace that her confessor said her passage to heaven would be but little delayed, if at all. Having received a hint that she would soon be promoted to an office of im-

portance, she especially thanked God that her last illness had come "to save her from such a calamity."

"Dear Sister," said one of her companions, "when you go to heaven will you not ask God to reunite us speedily?" With characteristic humility the dying nun replied: "O my darling! how could I have the assurance to speak to Almighty God in that way as soon as I got inside the door myself?" Even in her last moments she continued to exercise acts of humility and mortification, and thus passed to her reward, leaving indelibly impressed on the minds of those who were so fortunate as to know her the rarely-discovered truth that a life of humility and mortification is, to those who can appreciate its sweets, a foretaste of eternal glory.

Sister M. Gertrude Mulcahy followed, April 19, 1864, in her twenty-seventh year. Young though she was when her pure soul winged its flight to its Creator, she had given unmistakable evidence of high sanctity, being especially remarkable for her calm, sweet temper. Having full supervision of the schools in the early days before assistants could be trained or appointed, the suavity of her manner and temper, and the divine benignity of her countenance, were never known to be ruffled in the slightest degree. A native of Newcastle, Limerick, she left a large and happy family circle at the call of her heavenly Spouse. Her edifying life was the joy of her superiors and comfort of her Sisters, and made a deep and lasting impression on her pupils and all who had the good fortune to know her. One of the first professed at Enniskillen, she was also one of the first to receive the invitation of the heavenly Bridegroom to the unending bliss of His kingdom.

Of Sister Mary Teresa Harrison, the next called home, August 16, 1867, it is said that she was a model religious. Reared in luxury, she was by nature generous even to wastefulness, and her school-days, instead of being devoted to study, were spent as far as possible in seeking new

sources of amusement, feasting her companions, and reveling in their enjoyment of the pleasures she procured them. As soon as this gay, light-hearted girl heard the voice of the Master the grace of sacrifice was poured into her soul. She had been careless about the trinkets, clothing, and pocket-money of her early maiden days ; now she was most scrupulously exact in the observance of all that holy poverty demands. She had neglected at school to improve her fine natural abilities ; now that religious zeal required her to make the most of her talents, she made up for lost time by the closest application, and acquired such facility in teaching and school government as to elicit the marked approbation of the local and general inspectors. The sprightly girl was transformed into a most observant nun, and was particularly remarkable for her perfect observance of the rule of silence. "When she gave her heart to God," says her director, "she did it generously and unreservedly, in pure and perfect sacrifice. In spiritual language, she was completely dead to herself."

Her great ambition was to be received as a lay Sister ; and as this was not allowed her, she strove always for the lowest place and the meanest duties, and until her latest breath her motto was : "Sacrifice in everything for the love of God."

The evening before her death the mother-superior, who knew her intense love for our Lord's sacramental presence, sent word that she might assist at Benediction, if she pleased. Though in the last stage of consumption, she joyfully followed the messenger, and knelt during the whole ceremony. Next morning she went to behold her God face to face.

For four years no other sacrifice was required of the community. On the 15th of March Sister Dympna Maguire, a saintly lay Sister, "bade farewell to earth and received a crown of glory in exchange." The beautiful style in which this dear Sister made up altar linens, etc., while in

the laundry, was universally remarked. This was for her a labor of love from her burning desire to pay all possible respect to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, with whom she seemed to hold uninterrupted converse. Her very heart was in the tabernacle, and her devotion to Holy Mass, Benediction, and every ceremony directed to the adoration of her sacramental God made this humble lay Sister seem more like a seraph than a human being. This extraordinary love of our Lord's personal presence in the Blessed Eucharist obtained for her wonderful graces. Though her illness was long and painful, she was never obliged, on account of breaking her fast, to abstain from Holy Communion. One morning, after a night of excruciating torture, calmly and even joyously borne, she walked to a sofa to have her bedroom prepared for the coming of our Lord. The priest came after Mass to communicate her, and in about an hour, her whole soul being absorbed in adoration, this lowly adorer and spouse was enfolded for ever in the embraces of her sacramental God.

Two Sisters in nature and religion followed about four years later—Mary Clare and Mary Agnes Kearns. The former died of rapid consumption; the latter, who had been delicate long before her sister, was her nurse. Banishing every thought of self, she ministered to the corporal wants of her sister without forgetting her spiritual necessities. To her last breath she kept the crucifix to her lips and whispered words of courage and perseverance. Her own time of need was fast approaching, and in death she was not long divided from the sister she so tenderly loved. Their patronesses, the sisters Clare and Agnes of Scefi, whom they were said to resemble, must have received them in heaven with happy smiles. Like this saintly pair, our Clare was the first to enter religion and the first to enter heaven, her sister Agnes speedily following in both instances.

Sister M. Clare was remarkable for her tender love of

little children, for whom she showed all the solicitous affection of the fondest mother. And Sister M. Agnes was edifying to all by her patient endurance of sufferings of every species, joyfully received as from the hand of God.

Another holy death, and we shall conclude this chapter. Sister M. Teresa O'Doherty's short life was full of the sweetest memories. Her humility, her perfect obedience to God's will in health and sickness, her power of inspiring with love and virtue all who came in contact with her, were quite marvellous. One from whom she never concealed thought or wish, though he humbly deplores that he was too unworthy to appreciate the beauty of her soul, says that she never forgot the one thing necessary. When her companions were engaged in the follies and amusements of youth, Mary O'Doherty was thinking of her duty to her parents and her God. Even in her sweet school-days with the Enniskillen nuns she gave evidence of great virtue; her own will seemed absorbed in the will of God revealed to her by the duties of her state. Her singular obedience was attended by a train of virtues which pointed her out as a being wonderfully gifted by God, and this was more manifest when she became a Sister of Mercy. No matter how she was tried in the novitiate, or by the duties, often irksome, that now devolved on her, she was unalterably sweet and calm. Often when an ailing Sister was desired to remain in bed beyond the ordinary hour Sister M. Teresa would find time to do that sick Sister's manual labor as well as her own and her spirit of charity was shown to her dear Sisters in a thousand other ways.

This sweet Sister was an exact observer of the smallest rules. As the rules regarding intercourse with externs are very strict in the Order of Mercy, she would observe them in the letter and spirit, and would not even speak to or recognize her little sister Annie, who was one of the pupils, without special leave. She would never exceed, even

with her nearest relatives, the time allotted for visits, and, when sent to the parlor to see世俗s on business, the moment the business was concluded she sweetly and kindly closed the interview. Though most successful in all her duties, she never brought herself or her occupations forward in any way, and no one could glean from her conversation at recreation what charge she administered or whether she effected any good.

Sister M. Teresa was most anxious about the sick poor, and deemed it a special privilege to be allowed to attend them. At recreation she had always some amusing, innocent story to relate, some knotty riddle to propound; or some pleasant verses, generally of her own composition, to recite. When she became ill her sick-bed was but a new school in which to practise virtue; no complaint ever escaped her, and her only trouble seemed to be that she was too well served. The last evening of her life she was unusually pleasant at the general recreation; but next morning she received the last sacraments, and shortly after, while conversing on the beautiful story of St. Benedict, she closed her eyes for ever on a world whose charms had never enslaved her pure soul, and whose calamities she had borne with sweet patience and cheerful resignation.

Such is the story of this convent. "Though death," writes the worthy director of this nursery of saints, "has taken away many of our dear ones, we are strong in the love of our Lord, who sees what is best. When we reflect that so many trained in our own convent in the holy Rules of Our Lady of Mercy are now praying for us in heaven, we dare not, we cannot, be sorry for what gives such glory to God, confers such benefits on ourselves, and affords such example and encouragement to others; and when we consider the steadily-increasing utility of our nuns, and the ever-widening field of action in which their labors bear such abundant fruit, we have ample reason to be thankful to

God for what seems to be the effect of His special interposition."

"Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but unto Thy own Name give glory. Let the Name of the Lord be blessed from henceforth now and for ever."

## CHAPTER LI.

### OTHER FOUNDATIONS, CONCLUDED.

Templemore—Fortunate in being founded from St. Marie's of the Isle—Death of Dr. O'Connor—Developments—Thurles Hospital—Death of Sister M. Madeleine—Characteristics—Blessing of the new Convent—Benefactors—Death of the Archbishop—Intense Sorrow—Foundation—Visits of Mother Josephine—Tipperary—Arthur Moore, Esq., M.P.—Hospitals—Drangan—Probable new Departure—Letter of Lord Emly—Strain a Gnat and swallow a Camel—“Impartial and Unsectarian.”—Shameful Statistics—Interesting Incidents of the Dungarvan Foundation.

IN the year 1863 Most Rev. Dr. Leahy, Archbishop of Cashel, applied to the mother-superior of the Convent of Mercy, St. Marie's of the Isle, Cork, for Sisters of Mercy to be located in the pretty town of Templemore, where their advent was earnestly desired by the Rev. Dr. O'Connor, parish priest, and the good people of Templemore. The house was opened on the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, November 21, 1863. Mother M. Joseph Walsh was appointed superior of the little colony, composed besides of Sister M. Regis Crean, Sister M. Aquin McDonnell, and Sister M. Bernard Lawler. Templemore was indeed fortunate in obtaining as its foundresses Sisters who had made their novitiate in Cork, where, under the saintly and prudent Mother M. Josephine Warde, they had been thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the holy foundress.

On the Feast of the Purification, February 2, 1864, the Sisters opened a select school, which was immediately filled with young ladies of the town and surrounding country, who were most grateful for advantages of which they had

heretofore been deprived. In July a poor-school was opened, in which over two hundred girls were soon collected. But on February 8, 1867, a severe affliction befell the young community in the death of its founder, spiritual father, and faithful friend, Dr. O'Connor. He left to the convent all that he possessed. During his last illness he was daily tended by the Sisters, which was his greatest earthly comfort, and four Sisters were with him when he breathed his last. The doctor was a priest of most gentle and amiable manners, who exercised great influence over all; persons of every age and condition respected and looked up to him, even those who differed from him in religion. He was distinguished for his great charity and tender solicitude for the flock which God had committed to his keeping, and spared neither labor nor expense in procuring for his parishioners blessings for which they now bless God, not the least of which is the presence of the Mercy Sisterhood among them.—R.I.P.

In 1870 a large orphanage was opened, with ample accommodation and every convenience for training the children in each department of household management. The superior arrangements of this institution are such as to attract children from all parts of the country. In 1871 the Sisters began visiting the workhouse and hospital in Thurles, a town about ten miles distant, where a wide field was opened for their zeal. On the 24th of October the foundation-stone of a new convent was laid by Most Rev. Dr. Leahy, Archbishop of Cashel.

In 1872 the first death took place—Sister M. Madeleine McDonnell, daughter of Thomas McDonnell, Esq., of Cork. It was at her First Communion that this favored child received the grace of vocation, and during the few years which elapsed between that time and her entrance she thought of nothing but consecrating her young life to God. Gifted and accomplished in a high degree, possessed of everything that could render life attractive to an

ardent, loving nature, idolized by her family, of which she was the life and soul, she renounced all generously and courageously to consecrate herself to Christ and His poor. Miss McDonnell entered the novitiate on the Feast of the Presentation, November 21, 1867, her seventeenth birthday. Her amiable disposition and sweet, joyous spirit endeared her to her community, and in her last illness she edified all who approached her by her patience and gentleness. She died on a Friday, Feast of St. Cecilia, November 22, 1872. Almost her last words were: "Oh! how beautiful it is to die to-day." During her short religious life, five years, she was remarkable for her sweet simplicity and tender love for Our Blessed Lady and for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in which it is fondly hoped that this sweet spirit has long since found a home.

On the Feast of St. Augustine, August 28, 1872, the Sisters entered their new convent; a fine church was attached a little later. In June, 1874, took place the solemn dedication of this new church to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. "Never," writes a Sister, "did the sun's rays dance more gaily through the thick foliage of the majestic trees which surround the town, or rest more lovingly on the rich and varied lines of the Devil's Bit, which crowns the fair view from Templemore convent, than on that auspicious day which assembled such crowds of clergy and laity to witness the imposing ceremony. Well might the good towns-people be proud, as indeed they were, to see in their midst one of the handsomest and most flourishing convents in Ireland.

The procession formed, the archbishop in full pontificals, followed by the clergy and the Sisters bearing lighted tapers, after whom came the laity; and as the rich notes of the clergy, responded to by the Sisters, fell upon the ear, now in full, thrilling tones as the procession moved on, until they died away in soft, low cadence in the distance, many a heart went back to the time when Ireland and her

children had only proscribed priests to offer the Holy Sacrifice, not in stately church or on glittering altar, but hidden in some hollow or cavern, or far away in some wild mountain glen ; and fervent thanksgivings arose from the heart to the lips, and prayers that as we were more favored than our fathers, so we might never prove ungrateful, and all earnestly besought God that Ireland might once more become the Island of Saints.

The beautiful white marble high altar consecrated that day by his grace, so greatly and so justly admired by all for chaste beauty of design and elegance of workmanship, was the gift of Mrs. Thomas McDonnell, Cork ; and the three stained windows in the apse, by Mayer & Co., Munich—the centre one representing the Crucifixion, and on either side St. Patrick and St. Joseph—were the gift of Patrick and John McDonnell, Esquires, of Cork ; while the exquisite statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, white marble altar, and three stained windows—the centre representing the Assumption, and on either side St. Catherine and St. Mary Magdalen—in Our Lady's Oratory were presented by William Rice, Esq., Cork, another member of the same family, who have all proved themselves generous and devoted friends to the convent since its foundation, for whom, as for all benefactors, the Sisters constantly pray that God, who never lets Himself be outdone in generosity, will amply reward them here and hereafter.

On this auspicious occasion his grace delivered a powerful and appropriate sermon ; and as the sonorous tones of his rich, full voice fell on the ear how little the poor Sisters thought they were listening for the last time to his silvery notes ! He died January 26, 1875. His loss was deeply felt by the community, in whose spiritual and temporal welfare he had always taken a special interest. Templemore was the first foundation of Sisters of Mercy made in his diocese. The Sisters revered this holy and learned prelate as a tender father and firm friend. But he was regretted

not only in the convents he directed, and in which his sweet presence was always felt as a grace, but everywhere. Far and wide through the green hills of Tipperary from many a heart rose up the fervent *Requiescat* for this kind and gentle father, whom his people loved to call "the second Apostle of Temperance." Even in distant lands his merits and untiring labors to promote the welfare of his country were known and appreciated. In Rome his thrilling eloquence at the Vatican Council is not yet forgotten, and his death was mourned in the Eternal City as a great calamity. Well may the archdiocese of Cashel glory in reckoning on her list of archbishops one of the holiest, gentlest, wisest, and best men who ever wore the mitre of the fair City of the Kings.—R.I.P.

On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1876, application was made for a convent at Borrisoleigh, a town about seven miles distant, the funds being provided by Mrs. Milo Bourke. The parish priest, Rev. Canon Morris, was most anxious to procure Sisters from Templemore to supply the wants of his parish, and for this purpose he waited on the new archbishop, Most Rev. Dr. Croke, whom he entreated to use his influence with the superioress of the Templemore convent, which his grace readily consented to do. It was finally arranged that four choir Sisters and one lay Sister should begin their labors in this new field on the first of May following. His grace has proved himself a true friend by the delicate attentions and fatherly interest he has always taken in this flourishing branch.

Numerous conversions, especially among the military, have taken place since the influence of the Sisters has been felt in this pretty country town. Great numbers of the latter have been instructed and prepared for their reception into the Church by the Sisters, and many of them have made their abjuration and been baptized in the convent chapel.

This fine and flourishing institution was the last founda-

tion made outside of Cork by the beloved and lamented Mother Josephine Warde, who took a special interest in her Templemore children and several times underwent the fatigue of visiting them, to their great delight and spiritual profit. From Templemore this good mother had nothing but consolation, and if it, as well as the other houses of the Institute, was tried by crosses, it was by such crosses as God sends in His love, not by those which are given in His anger. Good Mother Josephine was wont to declare that a visit to this dear old town, near the source of that romantic stream, the fair Suir, used to renovate her mentally and physically. To see the work of God prospering was the only thing on earth that gave real delight to her zealous soul, and this delight she had good reason to feel in the sweet and pensive cloisters of Templemore convent.

#### TIPPERARY.

In 1864 a convent of Our Lady of Mercy was founded from Limerick in the town of Tipperary—an ancient and beautiful place, well known as a chief town, though not *the* chief town, of the premier county, and situated on the fair, clear stream called the Arra—and was twice visited by the saintly Mother Elizabeth Moore. It was opened the Feast of St. Bruno, October 6, under the patronage of Most Rev. Patrick Leahy, Archbishop of Cashel and Perpetual Administrator of Emly, and of the Very Rev. James Howley, P.P., V.G., Tipperary.

The Sisters were at first located in an old hospital on the Murgasty Hills, to make which habitable five hundred pounds were expended, contributed by Dr. Howley and his parishioners. But for many reasons the Hills were found to be very undesirable as a dwelling-place for nuns, and, after some years, they relinquished the old convent and purchased the interest of a beautiful mansion known as

“Rosanna House,” with twenty-five acres of fine land adjoining.

Thither the community removed in May, 1866, and immediately built and fitted up in the best style poor-schools and a pension-school for young ladies. On Sundays and holidays numbers of young girls and elderly women attend to receive instructions, to their great spiritual profit, and several sodalities have been established for the benefit of all classes. In 1873 a new convent was begun, which was finished the following year. The chapel yet remains to be built, as the Sisters preferred to content themselves with a small private choir and erect an industrial school and a House of Mercy. Their most munificent benefactor is Arthur Moore, Esq., of Mooresfort, M.P. for Clonmel, the county town of Tipperary, who contributed five hundred pounds towards these good works.

In 1873 the Tipperary Guardians (Poor-Law) solicited the Sisters of Mercy to take charge of the workhouse infirmary, and later on of the typhus-fever hospital attached to the union. With the archbishop's full approval six Sisters cheerfully assumed the charge, and Mr. Moore and other benevolent individuals largely contributed towards the fitting-up of the apartments set aside for the nuns, so as to allow but very little expense to fall on the union. The amount of good effected in these dreary institutions both for the souls and bodies of the hapless inmates will never be known till the great accounting day.

A branch was established at Drangan, a village about twenty-four miles from Tipperary, towards the founding of which the parish priest, Rev. Edward O'Shaughnessy, gave a fine house and garden, with six hundred pounds.

In 1877 the guardians of the Cashel workhouse made application to the Tipperary convent to have Sisters to minister to the sick in their hospital. The sanction of Most Rev. Dr. Croke having been obtained, a branch convent was established in Cashel of the Kings under

the protection of Ireland's apostle, the great St. Patrick.

The Tipperary Sisterhood, dwelling in the "clear air," have been remarkably healthy. In sixteen years they have made but one contribution to the "community in heaven"—Sister Mary Magdalen Shelly, who fell asleep in Christ September 16, 1876. The community numbers thirty-two nuns.

Limerick was the first convent to undertake the workhouse hospitals, which, being now almost universally in the hands of the Sisters of Mercy, give them the care of many thousands of the most destitute and heretofore most neglected class of the sick poor in Ireland. It would seem as though Limerick, from which the Tipperary house affiliated, were destined to make another new departure. A report of a committee of the Board of Guardians of the Limerick union, recommending the employment of Sisters of Mercy in the female workhouse schools, was unanimously adopted by the board in 1880. No objection was made by the Local Government Board, with whose sanction the Board of Guardians expended over eight hundred pounds in preparing separate accommodation for the workhouse girls. On the 29th of December, 1880, the board decided to appoint the Sisters of Mercy, but the Local Board refused to allow the appointments to go into effect on the day fixed. The employment of the nuns as teachers, however, if it has not yet taken place, is only a question of time, and it is gratifying to be able to say that the resolution to ask the Sisters of Mercy to assume charge of the poor children immured in these awful prisons, which are not the least of the evils Queen Elizabeth bequeathed to posterity, was moved and seconded by Protestants. Lord Emly, who was very much disappointed that the Local Government Board could make any difficulty or delay, wrote a strong letter of remonstrance, February 8, 1881, to Alderman O'Callaghan, of Limerick, from which we give a passage :

"I beg you to express to the Board of Guardians my regret that I cannot be present at their meeting, when the refusal of the Local Government Board to allow us to place our female schools under the direction of the Sisters of Mercy will be considered. It astonishes me that neither of the letters conveying that refusal adverts to the fact that the report of a committee adopted by our board many months ago, which recommended a large expenditure on the female-school buildings, also recommended the placing of our schools under the Sisters of Mercy. We know by experience that these ladies never lose sight of the girls they have trained, that they provide them with situations, and, as mothers, give them advice and comfort under the trials to which, as servants or otherwise, they may be exposed. Our principal object in incurring such heavy expense was to secure for the workhouse girls this inestimable advantage. It can be secured in no other way than that which we have suggested [namely, the employment of the Sisters of Mercy in the poorhouse schools]."

From statistics it appears that *one* Protestant is to be found among the "pauper children" of the south of Ireland every three years, yet, in deference to the imaginary Jewish and other non-Catholic element likely to invade the workhouses, the above gentlemen hesitated about confiding the poorhouse schools to the nuns—just as some of the government officials ask that the cross should be removed from its place of honor on the convent school-buildings because one child in every thousand children taught by nuns in Ireland is a Protestant! "Fancy," says Lord Emly, "an attempt being made in England to deprive hundreds of Protestant children of real and lifelong advantages on account of the presence in their school of one Catholic every three years!" And the same zealous Catholic nobleman gives the following statistics to show how the Local Government Board "which strains a gnat in Limerick swallows without a wry face a very large camel in Ulster": Strabane Union, eighty-eight Catholics, twenty-two Protestants, both teachers Protestant; Milford, thirty Catholics, nine

Protestants, teacher a Presbyterian ; Letterkenny, twenty-nine Catholics, thirteen Protestants, teacher a Presbyterian ; all through Ulster, in short, the majority of the poor children are Catholic, while the teachers are, we believe, invariably non-Catholic, though appointed by a government board which, in spite of such flagrant injustice, modestly proclaims itself "impartial and unsectarian in principle."

#### DUNGARVAN.

In the southern part of the County Waterford, facing a fine but neglected harbor of the same name, is the pretty town of Dungarvan, much resorted to for sea-bathing and noted for its extensive fisheries. Its situation is low and marshy, but healthy, at the mouth of a picturesque stream, the Colligan, and it boasts about six thousand inhabitants. Like many other places in Ireland, it perpetuates its founder in its name. St. Garvan, a disciple of St. Finbar, evincing the peculiarly elegant taste in the selection of sites which distinguished the old Celtic saints, founded a monastery on its wild but beautiful coast in the seventh century. A desolate waste soon became a flourishing town ; in a small way it had its fortifications and its ramparts, and a grateful people styled it *Dungarvan*, or the *Fort of St. Garvan*. Its history during the ages of persecution differed little from that of other remote towns ; through evil and good report its people kept the faith, and to-day are nearly all Catholics.

In 1850, as has been already stated, the saintly Mother Teresa Kelly, of Wexford, "one of God's heroines," founded at Cappoquin the first convent of Our Lady of Mercy in the diocese of Waterford, at the request of Most Rev. Dominic O'Brien, Lord Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. The want of a similar institution had been long felt in the larger and more important town of Dungarvan, and the zealous bishop having laid the matter before Mother

Teresa and the superioress of the Cappoquin establishment, it was decided that a few Sisters should be sent from Cappoquin to this new and more extensive field of labor.

Accordingly, on the Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, November 21, 1854, four members of the Mercy Sisterhood—Sisters M. Vincent Fanning, Aloysius O'Connor, Josephine Purcell, and Gertrude Houlihan—bade farewell to their lovely home on the romantic banks of the Blackwater, and arrived the same day in the ancient town of St. Garvan. According to previous arrangement with the holy bishop, a benevolent couple, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Carberry, gave them a house on the South Terrace, rent free, and they began forthwith their labors among the poor, sick, and ignorant.

It was agreed that the Sisters of Mercy should remain in their temporary home until the Presentation convent would be available; for a fine house was in course of erection in a distant quarter of the town for the Presentation nuns, to which they expected to migrate very soon.

The old convent, erected on Church Street in 1822, was a miserable, dilapidated structure, of which little care had recently been taken, as its holy inmates had begun their new home in 1850, though it was not ready for their reception till 1858. Never did the Sisters of Mercy attempt to glean in a more thorny field than Dungarvan proved to be. Crosses upon crosses rained on them incessantly, and many times they were on the point of giving up the old town of St. Garvan and returning to the convent in which they had spent the sweet and holy days of their spiritual infancy. But, having put their hand to the plough, they feared to look back, lest they should be judged unfit for the kingdom of heaven. Their worst trials came from a clergyman, otherwise a good man, who from the beginning conceived a most unaccountable dislike for the young Institute, and openly said that it should not take root in Dungarvan if he could help it, and, being a person of position and influence,

he was accustomed to think that without his patronage nothing could succeed in the small town in which the best part of his life was spent.

Though the old convent was little better than a ruin, Providence permitted that a person who should have been foremost to aid the Sisters in their early struggles should strive "by intrigue and duplicity" to prevent its falling into their hands. He began a series of hostilities against them, in which he persevered for twenty-one years with a zeal and fidelity worthy of a better cause. And yet his people, above all others, had the full benefit of their labors: the sick, the adults, and the children of his parish were as zealously instructed as if the incumbent had been their best friend, which, perhaps, he was; for God has always turned evil into good for the Order of Mercy, and it is a poor cause that is radically injured by a spicce of opposition or persecution. Yet the trial was unusually long and bitter—the space of twenty-one years is a large fraction of the longest life. But, by the divine grace, they persevered in meekness, silence, and humility, and at length experienced the truth of the saying that "all things come to those who know how to wait."

During this long and trying period of hardship and anxiety gleams of sunshine now and then illumined their rugged path. The bishop, though unable to relieve them from the pressure of continual opposition, always expressed himself highly pleased with their zealous labors in the duties of their Institute. He loved the poor, and was ever ready to uphold whatever could promote their interest or alleviate their hard lot. Hence the spiritual and corporal works of mercy continually performed by the Sisters his lordship deemed worthy of his paternal and cordial patronage. He was always and under all circumstances their most sincere friend, and left nothing undone in public or private to testify his respect and esteem for them.

Another kind friend of the infant Institute, still remem-

bered with veneration by the people of Dungarvan, was Rev. Maurice O'Gorman, parish priest of Abbeyside, who died October 14, 1861. He fostered with zealous care the growth of the little community, and watched over it so well that, as the Annals say, "the venomous darts of the enemy were foiled, and generally fell to the ground without being able to do the intended mischief." This holy man, deservedly spoken of as a true priest of God, was consoled in his last illness by the promises of a few rich inhabitants, who solemnly assured him that temporal means should not be wanting to the convent in which he was so deeply interested; and in every instance this assurance was accepted by the holy man as a personal favor. But after his precious death these parties put themselves under other guidance and followed other advice, so that nothing but disappointment and resignation on the part of the disappointed came of the many fine promises made to their dying pastor.

God sent His servants another friend, equally kind and generous, in Father O'Gorman's successor, Rev. Michael O'Donnell, whom the Annals describe "as too good for earth and ripe for heaven," but whose faithful ministrations they did not long enjoy, for he was called to an early crown in February, 1868.

Meanwhile the community had gone on increasing. Several died in the odor of sanctity, and the poor pilgrims from among whom they were translated realized the benefit of their prayers so soon that they felt assured of their full admission to the realms of glory. The Dungarvan community even gave a few zealous members to the Australian mission, who frequently send home glowing accounts of their success with the rich and the poor, adding that the non-Catholic colonists whom they have met in their distant home are so little prejudiced that they only require to be shown the doctrines of the true faith in order to embrace them. The good bishop continued the warmest friend of the community till his happy death, 1873.

This community, having sown in tears, may now reap in joy the blessed fruit of patience, zeal, and perseverance. The old convent has been remodelled, and so enlarged and improved as to be commodious and convenient—some say beautiful; and beautiful it certainly is in its exquisite neatness, though it be neither grand nor imposing. Almost all the works of mercy are now in successful operation; the poor-schools contain over three hundred pupils, the young ladies' school has a daily average attendance of seventy. The visitation of the sick and the instruction of adults go on incessantly; and the workhouse hospital, which contains two hundred patients to be nursed, consoled, and instructed, has for some years been under the Sisters' care.

With the Dungarvan convent of Our Lady of Mercy we may appropriately conclude our notices of the Mercy Institute in Ireland. A community able to grow and thrive despite crosses of every description—the most painful of which was the twenty-one years' active opposition of an ecclesiastic holding a high position and personally most influential—must have been singularly blessed and sustained by Him who so often chooses the weak things of this world to confound the strong; and its little story, though concisely told, will be a consolation and an encouragement to many a house struggling under similar difficulties. *I know Him in whom I have believed*—this knowledge is the root of perseverance in labors undertaken for the glory of God. In a letter dated March 27, 1860, the good bishop writes to the mother-superior: “I am convinced that your establishment is the work of God, and that those who co-operate in its [success] are doing what is very meritorious in the sight of God. I think it is impious to oppose it, and I believe likewise that it will be vain. Things much more feeble in their commencement have triumphed over all obstacles by the aid of God; and as I believe that God is well served in your community, so I believe that He will continue to assist you.”

From the bishop's hopeful words, so abundantly verified, many a community and many a religious will glean new courage to carry the daily cross and persevere to the end. Amen.

In conclusion of this first volume we give a list of the hundred and seventy convents of Our Lady of Mercy founded in Ireland up to the opening of the Jubilee year, 1881. There are four hundred and thirty convents of this Institute in existence at this date in all parts of the world.

#### INSTITUTIONS OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN IRELAND.

*Archdiocese of Dublin.*—St. Catherine's, Baggot Street ; Booterstown ; Kingstown ; Rathdrum ; Golden Bridge ; Jervis Street ; Mater Misericordiae ; Night Refuge, Brickfield Lane ; Hospital, Kingstown ; St. Mary's Retreat, Gloucester Street ; Blackrock ; St. Vincent's Hospital, South Dublin Union ; Athy ; Arklow—14.

*Diocese of Meath.*—Tullamore, Workhouse Hospital ; Navan, Workhouse Hospital ; Kells ; Drogheda ; Rochford Bridge ; Clara ; Trim ; Mullingar ; Ballymore ; Kilbeggan ; Hospital, Kells—13.

*Diocese of Cloyne.*—Charleville, Hospital ; Queenstown ; Mallow ; Macroom ; Kanturk ; Buttevant, Hospital ; Norwood ; Youghal—10.

*Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin.*—Carlow ; Naas, Hospital ; Celbridge ; Rathangan—5.

*Diocese of Cork.*—Cork, Mercy Hospital, Workhouse, Orphanage ; St. Vincent's ; Bantry ; Kinsale ; Passage West—8.

*Diocese of Limerick.*—St. Mary's, Limerick ; St. Vincent's, Limerick ; Hospital, Limerick ; Newcastle ; Rathkeale ; Adare ; Abbeyfeale, Fever Hospital, Widows' Home ; Kilmallock—10.

*Diocese of Galway.*—St. Teresa's, Galway, Magdalen Asylum, General Hospital, Fever Hospital ; Oughterard, Widow and Orphan Asylum ; Carna—7.

*Diocese of Killaloe.*—Birr, or Parsonstown, Hospital ; Nenagh, Hospital ; Kilrush, General Hospital, Fever Hospital ; Ennis, Hospital ; Kilkee—10.

*Dioceses of Cashel and Emly.*—Tipperary, Hospital ; Templemore ; Thurles ; Doone ; Drangan ; Cashel ; Cahir ; New Inn ; Borrisoleigh—10.

*Diocese of Ferns.*—Wexford ; Enniscorthy ; New Ross, Workhouse—4.

*Dioceses of Waterford and Lismore.*—Waterford ; Stradbally ; Piltown ; Dungarvan, Hospital ; Carrick-on-Suir ; Cappoquin ; Kilmacthomas—8.

*Diocese of Kerry (properly of Ardfert and Aghadoe).*—Killarney ; Tralee (1) Hospital, County Hospital ; Killarney, Hospital ; Castletown ; Tralee (2)—8.

*Diocese of Dromore*.—Newry ; Our Mother of Mercy's Home ; Rostrevor ; Lurgan—4.

*Diocese of Ossory*.—Callan ; Borris ; Kilkenny, Hospital—4.

*Diocese of Kilmore*.—Belturbet ; Ballinamore ; Cootehill—3.

*Diocese of Ardagh*.—Longford ; Moate ; Newtownforbes ; Ballymahon—4.

*Diocese of Armagh*.—Dundalk ; Ardee, Hospital—3.

*Diocese of Derry*.—Londonderry ; Moville ; Strabane ; Carndonagh.—4.

*Diocese of Clogher*.—Enniskillen—1.

*Diocese of Raphoe*.—Ballyshannon—1.

*Dioceses of Down and Connor*.—Belfast, Raglan Street ; Downpatrick—3.

*Diocese of Elphin*.—Sligo ; Athlone ; Roscommon ; Elphin ; Boyle—5.

*Diocese of Killala*.—Ballina—1.

*Dioceses of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora*.—Gort ; Ennistymon ; Kinvara ; Workhouse—4.

*Diocese of Ross*.—Skibbereen ; Clonakilty, Workhouse Hospital, Hospital—4.

*Diocese of Clonfert*.—Loughrea, Hospital ; Ballinasloe, Hospital, Reformatory—5.

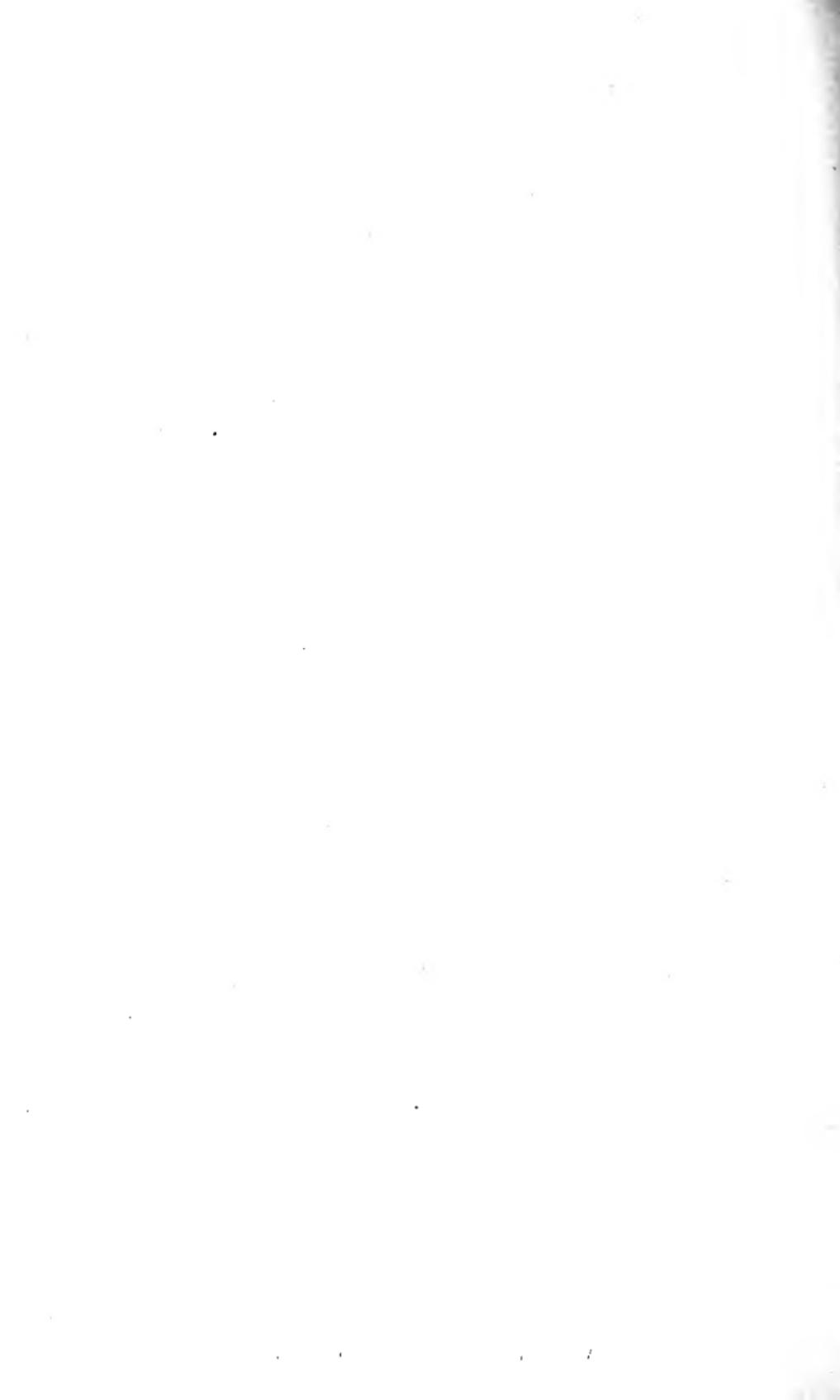
*Archdiocese of Tuam*.—Westport, Orphanage, Hospital ; Tuam, Orphanage, Hospital ; Clifden, Orphanage, Industrial School ; Ballinrobe, Hospital ; Castlebar ; Claremorris ; Rusheen ; Castlebar Union—15.

*Diocese of Achonry*.—Swineford, Hospital—2.

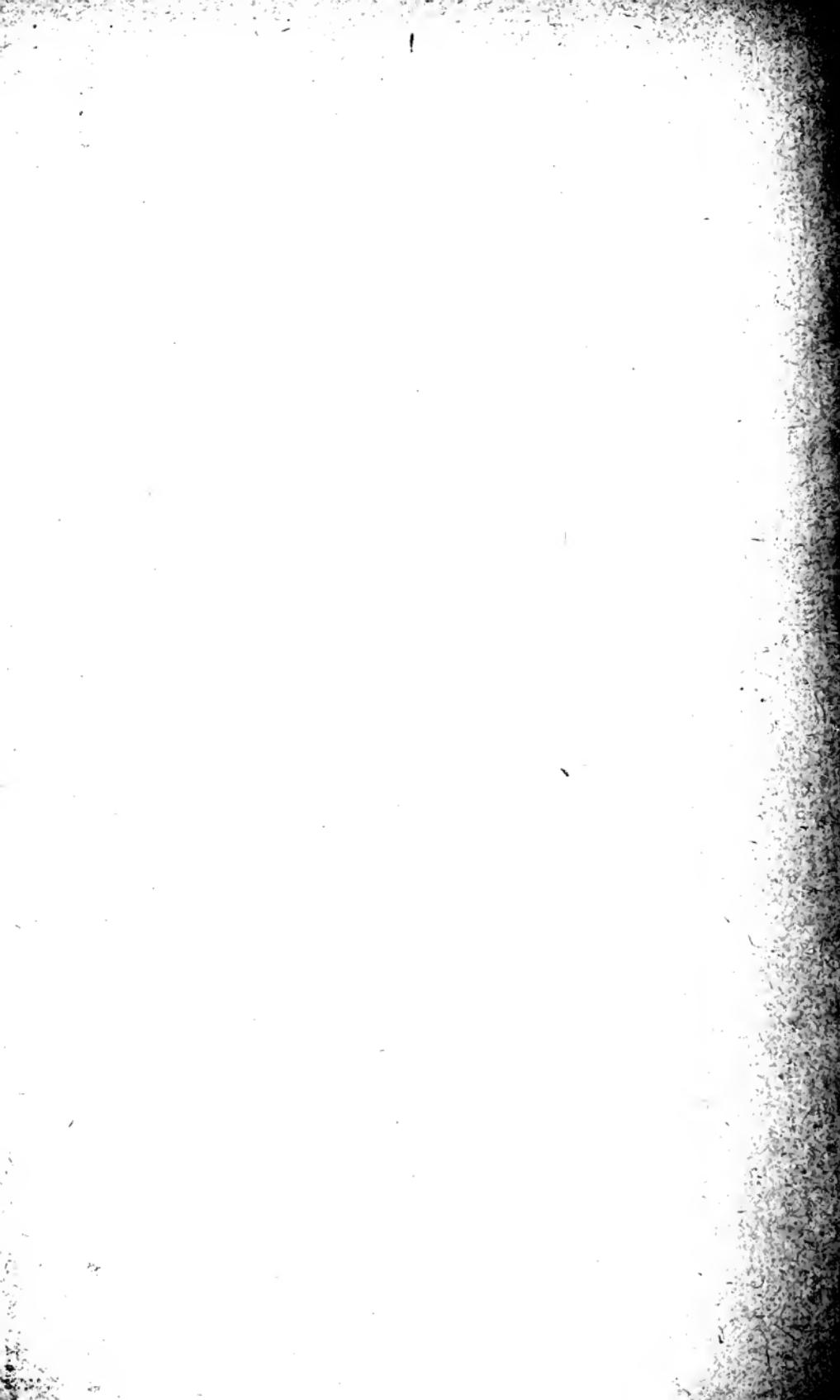
Total number of Convents of the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland—170.











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